BUDDHIST STUDIES FROM INDIA TO AMERICA

Essays in honor of Charles S. Prebish

Edited by Damien Keown

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BUDDHIST STUDIES FROM INDIA TO AMERICA

This book covers four important areas of Buddhist Studies: Vinaya Studies and Ethics, the history of Buddhist schools, Western Buddhism, and Inter-religious dialogue. These are the main areas which Charles S.Prebish has either inaugurated or helped to define; and his academic career as a leading international scholar, and his significant professional achievements are celebrated within this volume.

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Damien Keown is Professor of Buddhist Ethics at Goldsmiths College, London University. He is the author of many books on Buddhism and co-editor (with Charles S.Prebish) of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* and the Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism Series.

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PROLOGUE

This book has been compiled to honor the sixtieth birthday of Charles S. Prebish. Throughout his long academic career, spanning more than three decades and spent entirely at the Pennsylvania State University, he has not only assumed many leadership roles in the discipline of Buddhist Studies, but has been a major innovator in a variety of areas, both scholarly and pedagogical. His publication record includes 17 books, nearly 75 articles and chapters, and almost 50 book reviews. Moreover, he has presented nearly 50 scholarly papers throughout the world. As noted in the Introduction, his work on *Vinaya* and comparative Prātimokṣa studies, as well as early Indian Buddhist history, was truly pioneering with respect to understanding the foundations of the Buddhist tradition. Later, his research on American Buddhism and Buddhism in the Western world was the impetus behind establishing this area of inquiry as a legitimate sub-discipline in the larger spectrum of Buddhist Studies. Early on he played a vital role in bringing the full expression of information exchange technology to Buddhist Studies, and continued to demonstrate new and unique ways of sharing information with colleagues. Through his work on religion and sport, he also promoted intellectual dialogue across disciplines. And in his work on pedgagogy, he provided new ways to utilize technology as a teaching device, having participated in the first major project to bring eTextbooks into Religious Studies classrooms.

In light of the above it is ironic that at the outset of his career Charles Prebish had no intention whatsoever of becoming a professor of Buddhist Studies and spending more than three decades laboring in this field. The second son of a Russian immigrant from Kiev and his first-generation American bride, Chuck had every intention of fulfilling his father's lifelong wish that his younger son would become a medical doctor. But when he went off to Western Reserve University in Cleveland in the fall of 1962 to embark on a pre-medicine curriculum, less than a year after his father's untimely death at age 48 following a five-year battle with a brain tumor, he was still too traumatized to really believe he could psychologically manage the vagaries of confronting death on a daily basis to fulfill his promise to his father. Instead, he concluded that he would pursue dentistry, which certainly fell within the boundaries of the healthcare professions but didn't challenge his still fragile struggle with life and death issues.

When Chuck wandered into David M.Miller's "Buddha and Buddhism" course in the fall of 1965, his life changed forever. From Miller's first mention of Siddhārtha Gautama's struggle with birth, old age, sickness, and death, and the craving that ties each

of us into the cycle of *saṃsāra*, Chuck knew he was "home," professionally and personally. Long before he considered a career in Buddhist Studies, he "took refuge" at the Buddhist Vihara Society in Washington, D.C., and began learning Theravāda meditation from the resident monk, Bope Vinita. He began scouring Cleveland's bookstores for anything and everything he could find on Buddhism, and he began making frequent visits to the John G.White collection of books at the Cleveland Public Library, which had rich resources on Buddhism. By the time of his graduation in June 1966, he was dreading his matriculation in the incoming fall class of the newly named Case Western Reserve University's Dental School. After much inner turmoil, Chuck withdrew from Dental School shortly before the end of his first semester, and embarked on an M.A. program in Religion beginning in the spring semester of 1967.

Under the watchful eye of his mentor and now friend, David Miller, he completed the major requirements for his first graduate degree in one semester and a summer, and also applied to the Buddhist Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin. The letter he received from Richard Robinson regarding his admission to the first Buddhist Studies Program in North America was less than a blessing. While he was admitted to the M.A. Program, Robinson expressed serious concerns about whether he could handle the rigorous requirements of learning Sanskrit and additional languages. He took the letter as a challenge, and headed off to Madison in the fall of 1967.

Madison was a flurry of Buddhist Studies activities. Not only were there about two dozen Buddhist Studies graduate students, but they were all as excited about their learning as Chuck, and all eager and willing to share their learning. From the outset, they learned about the legendary scholars of Buddhist Studies—Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, de La Vallée Poussin, Stcherbatksy, Lamotte, Bareau—but they also learned about the current scholars such as Edward Conze, Alex Wayman, Leon Hurvitz, Jan de Jong, and others. Robinson knew them all, and his anecdotal stories revealed them to be a generally brilliant but disagreeable group. It was then that Chuck began to imagine the Buddhist Studies of the future as consisting of an equally intellectually aggressive group of scholars, but one that shared and even generated some of the compassion they were all learning about in their textbooks. It was an exciting time for him.

During that first year at Wisconsin, two further events occurred that shaped the future of his career. In December 1967 he met his future wife, Susan; and in spring 1968, Richard Robinson invited Chuck to serve as his research assistant. At the same time, Robinson concluded that Chuck's progress in Sanskrit was excellent, and shifted him from the M.A. Program directly into the Ph.D. Program. From that moment on, Robinson began training Chuck for his future. They immediately began planning his dissertation topic, which focused on a comparative study of the *Vinaya*, and especially the *Prātimokṣa*. Many years later, in his 1999 book *Luminous Passage: The Practice and Study of Buddhism in America,* Chuck described this event as having taken place in a Madison bar, over beer and bratwurst; the learned master leaned over the table and whispered to his eager student precisely how to build a safe and stable career in Buddhist Studies. He muttered only one word: *"sangha."* Strange as it seems, that one word fueled the rest of Chuck's career in Buddhist Studies.

Robinson never saw the completion of Chuck's Ph.D. because he died in the summer of 1970 following a terrible explosion in which he was severely, and fatally, burned. Chuck always remembered that earlier, on the day of the accident, Robinson had met

Chuck's young son for the first time. Following Robinson's death, Chuck finished his degree under the guidance of Stephan Beyer, completing a dissertation entitled "The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsāṃgikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins: Texts, Translations, and an Introductory Exposition," an 800-page effort that raised new questions about the relationships of monastic texts in the various Buddhist sects, and that would provide the impetus for Chuck's first ten years of publications.

Prior to the completion of his degree, Chuck was interviewed for a teaching position at the Pennsylvania State University. It had a large Religious Studies Department founded and headed by Luther H.Harshbarger, who had also fashioned a fledgling Ph.D. program focusing on "Religion in American Culture." Despite the focus, Harshbarger wanted to collect specialists in each of the world's religious traditions, and his current Buddhism specialist, Garma Chen-chi Chang, was about to retire. Following a whirlwind three-day visit, Chuck was offered the position, but given only a weekend to accept or reject the offer. With a young family to raise, and a tightening job market in Religious Studies, Chuck accepted the job, expecting to spend a few years at Penn State before moving on to other appointments. Needless to say, that "few years" turned into more than 30.

With his Ph.D. in hand, Chuck began his teaching career at Penn State in the fall of 1971, just prior to his twenty-seventh birthday. He immediately set about trying to get the *Prātimokṣa* translations from his dissertation published, as well as several articles on early Indian Buddhist history, also gleaned from his dissertation. His first book, published in 1975 by Penn State Press, was called *Buddhist Monastic* Discipline: The Sanskrit *Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins.* It presented face-to-face translations of the texts, along with introductory material and extensive concordance tables. This was important work because Chuck took the opposite view to most *Vinaya* scholars, namely that rather than being almost completely identical and differing only in minimal ways, the various *Vinaya* texts of the early schools showed important and highly significant differences which not only inform us about the uniqueness of each school but also shed considerable light on the process by which early Indian Buddhist sectarianism developed. His early articles, "Theories Concerning the Skandhaka: An Appraisal" (1973), "A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Councils" (1974), and "The Prātimokṣa Puzzle: Fact Versus Fantasy" (1974), spelled out these issues in great detail.

In 1974, Chuck met Jan Nattier, then a graduate student at Harvard, and discovered that they shared an interest in unraveling the beginning of Indian Buddhist sectarianism. By pooling their respective interests and talents, they produced a 1977 article entitled Mahāsāṃghikas Origins: The Beginnings of Buddhist Sectarianism" that completely undermined the previously accepted theory for the beginning of sectarianism, arguing that division in the Buddhist community proceeded not from *Vinaya* laxity on the part of the future Mahāsāṃghikas and not from the five theses of the monk Mahādeva, but rather from *Vinaya* expansion on the part of the future Sthaviras. Though profoundly revolutionary, their theory was quickly accepted, despite being contrary to that of the great French Buddhologist André Bareau. Years later, Chuck got a simple, handwritten note from Bareau that said simply, regarding his theory, "Well, maybe!" Richard Robinson's point in directing Chuck toward study of the *sangha* was based on his suspicion that nobody would ever be very much interested in this topic, and Chuck would

have safe employment simply by virtue of being the *only* scholar in this area. Time has proved that suspicion wrong, as *Vinaya* studies has enjoyed a huge flowering of interest over the past 25 years, much of it inspired by Chuck's pioneering work.

While doing his traditional Buddhological research, Chuck knew if he was ever going to have a role in Penn State's graduate program in Religious Studies, he would also need to focus on some aspect of America. Clearly, though, there weren't very many Buddhists in the United States in 1970. One estimate suggested a figure of 100,000, almost entirely with Buddhist Churches of America, a Jōdo Shinshū organization appealing to Japanese-American immigrants. However, the United States changed its immigration law in 1965, allowing for a huge influx of Asian Buddhists from war-torn Southeast Asia. In addition, the social and religious turmoil of the 1960s created lots of interest in new religions in America's youth culture. Chuck foresaw many changes on the American religious landscape, not the least of them being an immense new interest in Buddhism. By the time he went to Naropa Institute in 1974 to teach Sanskrit, he had already taught the first course on "American Buddhism" in an American university, despite the fact that nobody seemed to think there even was such a thing. Chuck's 1979 volume *American Buddhism*, along with similar volumes by Emma Layman, Tetsuden Kashima, and Rick Fields, paved the way for what has become a completely new sub-discipline within the field of Buddhist Studies. When Chuck first began his research on American forms of Buddhism, there was no literature upon which to draw. Now, largely due to his pioneering efforts, the literature on American Buddhism and Western Buddhism is so extensive that it is routinely published in scholarly journals and by university presses. Hundreds of dissertations on American Buddhism are now completed every decade, and it is not surprising that Paul Numrich recently referred to Chuck as the "Dean of American Buddhist Studies." His 1999 monograph and two edited volumes (1998 and 2002) on American Buddhism, published by the University of California Press, will represent the most important trilogy of books on this topic for years to come.

Despite building a career as an innovator in studies on early Indian Buddhism and American Buddhism, Chuck has offered much service to his discipline. Always mindful of his concern for advancing the field of Buddhist Studies, he was the first Associate Secretary of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, founded in 1976, and then served an additional term on the Board of Directors. More importantly, though, along with George Bond, he founded the Buddhism Group of the American Academy of Religion in 1981, and they served as its first co-chairs. When their five-year term was up the Buddhism Group was upgraded to a "Section," and Bond and Chuck both continued for an additional term on the Steering Committee. His work in the American Academy of Religion spurred an interest in trying to find out more about the development and productivity of Buddhist Studies scholars in North America, so in 1993 and 1995 Chuck conducted the first statistical surveys of his colleagues, publishing his results—some of which were surprising—in a variety of sources.

Throughout the 1980s, Chuck continued his work in Buddhist Studies, and did further work in Religious Studies by serving as a networker for *Religious Studies Review*, but he also cultivated a new interest in the relationship between religion and sport. His curiosity piqued by Michael Novak's 1976 book *The Joy of Sports*, his own career as a marathon runner (running 70 miles per week), his younger son's competitive years as a wrestler (who won two world championships along the way), and his own career as an Olympic-

style wrestling official, in which he attained the highest rating category in the United States, Chuck began to write essays and articles on sport and religion, arguing that sport had become a religion in its own right: not simply a secular expression of religion or a civil religion, but a religion in the full, sacred sense of the term. His work eventually resulted in a book entitled *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane*. This volume is still used in many classrooms, and Chuck still receives invitations for interviews every year around Super Bowl time.

By the 1990s, apart from his interest in American Buddhism, Chuck had become interested in the ethical interface between ancient and modern expressions of the Buddhist tradition. He also began to realize that information exchange technology in general, and in specific application to Buddhist Studies, had come a long way from the initial inroads made by Jamie Hubbard, Richard Hayes, and others. Combining our interests, he and I began the online *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* in 1994, hoping to revive and expand study of this important area of Buddhist Studies, utilizing the most sophisticated technology available. The *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* was the first online peer-reviewed journal in the field of Religious Studies, won many awards, and still continues today—with more than 6000 subscribers in 60 countries—as the archetypal model for journals of this sort. Six years later, in 2000, Chuck and Martin Baumann founded the online *Journal of Global Buddhism*, which continues today as a resource focusing especially on Buddhism's development in the Western world. For four years, between 1994 and 1998, Chuck also served as editor-in-chief of *Critical Review of Books in Religion*, a journal jointly published by the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. Since 1993, he has also served as North American Representative of *Buddhist Studies Review*, published in London by the United Kingdom Association of Buddhist Studies. In 1996, he served as guest editor for a focus edition of *the Journal of Religious Ethics* devoted to Buddhist ethics.

In addition to his work with journals, in 1996 Chuck also co-founded (with me) the *Critical Studies in Buddhism* series published by RoutledgeCurzon. The series currently has more than 30 volumes in print, and has provided an important publication venue not just for senior scholars but also for junior Buddhist Studies researchers as well. Chuck is especially proud that the series has aided numerous young scholars on their path to the safe employment that tenure brings, and that our publisher has shared this important vision of contributing to the discipline rather than simply earning profits from it. In addition to the *Critical Studies in Buddhism* series Chuck and I are also co-editors of the RoutledgeCurzon *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* project, a massive 1000-page volume planned for publication in 2007. It will combine the scholarly writing of approximately 25 of the finest Buddhist Studies scholars around the world.

During his long career, Chuck has been continually active in professional societies, having maintained memberships in the International Association of Buddhist Studies, American Academy of Religion, Association for Asian Studies, American Oriental Society, Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, Pāli Text Society, Society for Buddhist—Christian Studies, and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. He also founded, with James Adair, the Association of Peer-Reviewed Electronic Journals in Religion, for which he served as vice-president from 1999 to 2001 and as president from 2001 to 2003. He has won numerous grants and fellowships, including a Rockefeller National Humanities Fellowship for 1997–98 at the Centre for the Study of Religion at the

University of Toronto. In 1993 he served as Distinguished Visiting Professor and holder of the Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies at the University of Calgary. He has presented scholarly papers throughout the world, and has recently been the keynote speaker at the "Buddha: Radiant Awakening" exhibit at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney and the United Kingdom Association of Buddhist Studies in London.

In addition to the above, Chuck has always loved the classroom. In his years at Penn State, he's taught nearly two dozen courses, ranging from "Introduction to World Religions" to a "Seminar on Indian Buddhist Sectarianism." Chuck intends to retire from Penn State in June 2007, and his last major project involves creating a series of eTextbooks that will assist scholars throughout the field of Religious Studies to utilize the newest technology so as to make the classroom experience of students throughout the world more exciting and more fulfilling. These books can be found through the Journal of Buddhist Ethics Online Books at http://www.jbeonlinebooks.org/.

Christopher Queen once remarked at an American Academy of Religion meeting that he sometimes wondered if Chuck had a computer chip implanted in his brain because he always responded to e-mail correspondence so quickly. I suppose others have wondered the same thing, and maybe even wished it was not true, as they were bombarded with Chuck's incessant notes badgering them to meet their deadlines for articles and chapters and book manuscripts. Those of us who have known Chuck best and longest will know him as a scholar who, despite his career-long quest for genuine civility within the discipline of Buddhist Studies, took huge intellectual risks, and continually put himself on the proverbial line in promoting new theories, new approaches, and new products. The title of this volume, *Buddhist Studies from India to America*, really does apply to Charles Prebish, and we hope that the fruit of his long career really is a discipline of Buddhist Studies that remains as intellectually curious as ever, and as rigorous in its search for the truth, and yet cultivates compassion along with wisdom.

Damien Keown
London, August 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Damien Keown

An outstanding group of scholars was invited to contribute to this volume, all wishing to commemorate the contribution to Buddhist Studies of Charles S.Prebish, one of the most proactive and inexhaustible colleagues to work in the discipline over the last half-century. The selection of contributors reflects Chuck's own penchant for supporting both junior and senior scholars, of both genders, and of all cultures. Each contributor to this volume shares an interdependent history with Chuck, that is having influenced Chuck and in return been influenced by him. Moreover, their contributions span the face of Buddhist Studies.

The volume has been divided into four major sections, each reflecting a major emphasis of Chuck's work: *Vinaya* studies and ethics; Buddhist traditions; Western Buddhism; and inter-religious dialogue.

Vinaya studies and ethics

Before becoming director of the Institute for Asian Studies at Florida International University, **Steven Heine** spent half a dozen years at Penn State. During most of those years, his office was right next door to Chuck's, and they were able to interact on a daily basis. Apart from their friendly arguments about the respective merits of the Phillies and the Cubs, Steve shared his insights as one of the most creative and innovative Dōgen scholars in the world with Chuck, and Chuck shared his thoughts about ethics and precepts with Steve. Their interdependent relationship continued after Steve's departure, and culminated in their edited volume *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition,* published by Oxford University Press in 2003. In his chapter here, Heine explores the role of precepts with respect to the theory and practice of Dōgen. Heine's work is especially important in terms of what Dōgen's view of the precepts reveals about his relationship to the Ch'an Five Mountains monastic institution and early Zen predecessors and rivals, as well as the Japanese Tendai tradition from which the Zen school developed as an independent sect. It considers what seems to be an inconsistency in the way Dōgen appropriated and utilized the precepts in the creation of his monastic system at his two main temples.

Robert L.Hood's relationship to Chuck is the most recent of all the contributors to this volume. Several years ago he became the technical editor of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* not long after the journal had been maliciously hacked into, and was beginning to rebuild its files and its services. The current success of the journal is largely due to Robert's selfless efforts. His innovative mix of technological skills and sophistication as

an ethics scholar, combined with his deep personal commitment to Buddhism, has made him a solid partner in Chuck's sense of work and mission. In addition, he has created the entire technological package that has become Journal of Buddhist Ethics Online Books, the home of the eTextbook project. Robert Hood's chapter, "Buddhism and the practice of bioethics in the United States," emerges from a real-life situation in which a Burmese monk suffered a stroke while living in the United States. When it became clear that death was imminent, serious ethical issues were considered in confronting the decision about whether to withdraw care, highlighting concerns for the relationship between Buddhism and bioethics, and examining the need for monks to have powers of attorney that identify healthcare decision makers, as well considering the process by which monks might communicate their choices in these matters to their supporting lay communities.

My own collaboration with Chuck dates back to an ongoing discussion that developed following his review article devoted to my book *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics.* Since 1995, we have not only collaborated on joint projects such as the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics,* the *Critical Studies in Buddhism* series, and our eTextbook project, but we have participated on panels together in the United States, England, and Switzerland, and shared each other's homes and families. Our constant dialogue, on a daily basis, has been a rewarding part of our lives, not only for our shared professional passion but for our friendship. My chapter is an outgrowth of our joint concern for issues relative to Buddhist ethics, with mine having focused on traditional or "mainstream" Buddhism and Chuck's on its application in the West. In the chapter I suggest that the encounter of Buddhism with the West is problematized by the absence of the discipline of ethics in Buddhism as a religious tradition, contrasted with the high profile of the discipline of ethics in the West. The chapter consists of two parts. In the first, I explain what I mean when I claim that Buddhism has no ethics, while the second offers some tentative suggestions as to why this seems to be the case. My comments reflect many of my personal reflections gleaned from my own quarter-century study of the topic of Buddhist ethics.

Judith Simmer-Brown and Chuck share a quarter-century friendship that began not long after Chuck had been a faculty member in the first two summers of Naropa Institute (now Naropa University). In addition to collaborating on a number of projects, they have shared an interest in nuns' *Vinaya*, and also in the way in which family relationships were being developed in American Buddhism. Judith Simmer-Brown's chapter addresses the possibility of the creation of an order of fully ordained Tibetan Buddhist nuns. It moves beyond the current case-by-case ordination of individual women to a consideration of the establishment of an authentic ordination lineage that preserves the integrity of transmission. It also explores the concerns of the current Tibetan Buddhist tradition in exile. She also clearly demonstrates that such a desideratum is no easy task.

Buddhist traditions

Michael Bathgate is the very first of Chuck's Penn State students to go on to graduate school and earn a Ph.D. in the field of Religious Studies. Following his undergraduate days, he moved on to the University of Chicago where he earned his degree in the History of Religions Program, working under such brilliant scholars as Frank Reynolds, Jonathan Z.Smith, and Bruce Lincoln. His chapter reflects some of the discussions about

Buddhist literature that began while he was studying at Penn State, and which continue with Chuck into the present. In "The time of *Ōjōden:* narrative and salvation in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism," he examines the role of story literature in the Japanese Pure Land tradition, particularly with respect to religious biographies known as *ōjōden,* or accounts of people who gained birth in Amida's Pure Land. According to Bathgate, the authors of *ōjōden* stressed that the goals of their compilations involved establishing karmic connections *(kechien)* and encouragement *(kanjin).* As his chapter unfolds, he shows how *ōjōden* literature functions as a complement rather than an adjunct to Pure Land scriptures, much as traditional *avadāna* literature functions in Indian Buddhism.

Mavis L.Fenn has been a part of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* family for many years, and a colleague of Chuck's for far longer. During Chuck's year spent as a Rockefeller Fellow at the University of Toronto, Mavis's home was his most frequent location. It was there that they spent endless hours debating all aspects of Buddhism, often informed by Mavis's colleagues from the McMaster University "crowd" of excellent scholars such as Joel Tatelman and Graeme MacQueen. Chuck's continuing visits to Kitchener, where Mavis now resides, and the long afternoons spent on Mavis's outdoor deck furiously arguing about everything from Devadatta to antiques, are among Chuck's fondest memories. Mavis Fenn's chapter focuses on the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*, an early Buddhist scripture that includes themes involving both socio-political matters and renunciation. She analyzes the text in terms of its frame tale and the embedded story within that tale, arguing that the embedded tale—which is concerned with socio-political matters such as employment, fair wages, just taxation, and the like—is subordinated to the frame tale, which invariably concludes that renunciation is the best sacrifice. As such, the text has serious implications for Buddhism's globalization and confrontation with the rapid changes of modernity.

Leslie Kawamura was the second co-chair of the American Academy of Religion "Section," following Chuck and George Bond. Together they shared a vision of what that unit should be, and they continue to have yearly discussions about the degree to which the unit has, and has not, fulfilled their vision. During Chuck's semester at Calgary in 1993, during which time he held the Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies, he had lunch every weekday with Leslie, and Chuck calls those occasions his second education in Buddhist Studies. Kawamura's shining compassion, and willingness to openly share his vast learning, have been huge treasures for Chuck. Leslie Kawamura's chapter on "Mi-pham's contribution to Yogācāra" has three major parts. First, he comments generally on the issue of why a discussion of the *trisvabhāva* theory remains worthwhile. Second, he considers the similarity between Mi-pham's discussion of this topic and that of Asaṅga in the second chapter of his *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*. Third, he examines Mi-pham's discussion of the seventh chapter of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, noting his comments on the distinction between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools.

Chuck claims to have had two formal and one informal Buddhist teachers. He "took refuge" under Bope Vinita, and received bodhisattva vows from Sister Karma Kechog Palmö. But he has always felt, and revealed to his friends, that his most important Buddhist teacher was Richard Robinson. Since Robinson's death in 1970, Chuck has had friendly relationships with famous Buddhist teachers like Chögyam Trungpa, but none has been as important to him as his friendship with John Daido Loori, Rōshi. Although he

first met Daido Rōshi in 1974, he never visited Zen Mountain Monastery until 1995. To this day, he claims it has been the most important visit to any Buddhist center that he has ever made. Their friendship involves much more than their respective backgrounds in food chemistry and technology. Chuck believes Daido Rōshi is the most important and influential Zen teacher in America today, and finds his blend of traditional Zen with American customs critical to the growth of American Buddhism. In “Entering the fray,” Daido Rōshi argues that while our nation is prosperous, and the *Dharma* is advancing in the United States, world peace remains a distant dream, and issues such as overpopulation, hunger, and so forth remain critical issues for a planet that is dying. His chapter explains what his tradition—the Mountains and Rivers Order and Zen Mountain Monastery in particular—are doing about it. Using *kōan* style, as he often does in his writing, he considers such topics as the National Prison Buddhist Sangha and the Zen Environmental Studies Institute.

John Powers and Chuck have been American Academy of Religion colleagues and pals for many years. Despite the fact that their respective specialties are vastly different, they have always found ways to bridge the gap and share their learning. Although one probably wouldn’t guess it upon seeing them, each is an “old jock,” to use American sport parlance. John still plays hockey now and again, and Chuck continues cycling and walking, following his career as a runner and a successful baseball player. In “Stealth polemics: Tsong kha pa on the difference between *sūtra* and tantra,” John Powers begins by providing much background information on Tsong kha pa, which is very useful for contextualizing the work of this critically important Tibetan Buddhist thinker. He then moves on to distinguish between the “*sūtra* path” and the “*tantra* path.” Both paths refer to the *bodhisattva* practices of the Mahāyāna tradition and emphasize the arising of *bodhicitta* and practice of the *pāramitās,* but according to Tsong kha pa, the tantra path is more rapid. Tsong kha pa goes on to note that in tantra we “use desire in the path,” and while *sūtra* practitioners also use “afflictive emotions,” tantric practices do so more skillfully. In other words, according to Tsong kha pa, the essential difference is *method,* thus making tantra superior to *sūtra*.

With the exception of Donald Swearer, Chuck has known Reginald A. Ray longer than any contributor to this volume. During the first two summers of Naropa Institute, they spent an enormous amount of time together, learning and sharing, often joined by their then mutual friend Jan Nattier. These were exciting discussions, focusing not only on traditional Buddhist Studies, but also on the making of American Buddhism and American Buddhist education. Those discussions have continued for over 30 years. In his chapter “A note on the term ‘*citta-mātra*’ in the Sanskrit *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*” Reginald Ray considers the important term *citta-mātra,* and its usage in the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. He concludes that the Indian and Tibetan interpretations of the term are not satisfying because they tend to lump together ideas and definitions from a number of different traditions and thought streams. However, he believes that the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, where *citta-mātra* stands in a central position, holds the key to understanding the true meaning of the term. He focuses on an elucidation of that text’s exposition of the term.

Western Buddhism

Martin Baumann and Chuck are longtime collaborators. For many years they have shared the same burning passion for the study of Western Buddhism, and Chuck believes Martin Baumann knows more about Western forms of Buddhism than anyone on the planet. Despite having only few opportunities to spend extended time together, they have collaborated on the creation of the *Journal of Global Buddhism*, the volume *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia*, and many panels at scholarly meetings. Chuck shares Martin's preoccupation with bibliographic thoroughness, and they have also shared family photos and their love of dogs. Paul Dahlke is certainly one of the most famous German Buddhists, if not the most famous, yet his achievements are barely known outside the German-speaking world. In his chapter, Martin Baumann outlines the work and contribution of this early German Buddhist pioneer. He discusses his role in the German Buddhist movement of the 1920s, as well as his construction of the Buddhist House in Berlin which still exists today. Baumann also contextualizes Dahlke's work and ideals within the broader cultural framework of German romanticism.

Franz Metcalf's work on the relationship of psychology to Buddhism, and especially to American Buddhism, was the point of departure for his long friendship with Chuck. His work on the Zen Center of Los Angeles remains the most important study of that influential group to date. Franz has an almost outrageous optimism and energy, and it has been those characteristics that have created his professional bond with Chuck. Chuck appointed Franz as book review editor of the *Journal of Global Buddhism,* and he continues in that role today. Franz also remains the only person in Buddhist Studies to know more about French wines than Chuck. In "An object-relations psychology of Zen practice," Franz Metcalf tells us at the outset that, when searching for deep happiness and meaning in this life, he turns first to Zen, and second to the object-relations psychology of D.W.Winnicott. Looking at American Zen practice from Winnicott's psychological perspective affords Metcalf insights into Zen's popularity, hierarchical dynamics (and dangers), institutional structures, and so forth. He also argues that the field of American Buddhism must not be "ghettoized" in relation to Buddhist Studies in general, or to any discipline.

Paul David Numrich published an article on *Vinaya* in Western Buddhist communities in the very first issue of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*. By that time, he had established himself as the leading authority on ethnic Theravāda Buddhist groups in the United States. It has been his work on ethnic Buddhism in America that has educated Chuck and others on the importance of this aspect of Buddhism's globalization. Numrich and Chuck have maintained an ongoing dialogue on the interplay between ethnic and convert Buddhism for over a decade. Probably no issue in American Buddhism has generated as much debate as the "Two Buddhisms" theory, and Chuck was clearly at the heart of it, first applying the notion to the distinction between ethnic and convert Buddhists in his 1979 volume *American Buddhism* and refining the notion early in the 1990s. Paul Numrich's chapter "Two Buddhisms further considered" takes off from Chuck's article "Two Buddhisms Reconsidered" published in the 1993 edition *of Buddhist Studies*

Review. It is an exhaustive study of both the two Buddhisms theory and the larger concept of ethnic and convert Buddhism in America.

Inter-religious dialogue

When Chuck began writing about religion and sport, not many others were doing so. Of those who did, Brian Aitken's work was the most intellectually creative and stimulating. With a strong background in Religious Studies, he brought to the dialogue far more breadth than the sociologists and philosophers who also wandered into the territory. Like Chuck's work, Aitken's was more provocative than that of Robert Higgs, Shirl Hoffman, and Joseph Price. As a result, Aitken and Chuck have shared a common and ongoing commitment to understanding sport as more than just a quick perusal of the "sports pages" of the daily newspaper. Brian Aitken begins his chapter with three stories from the Ulster Cycle, one of four collections of Irish myths. He uses this framework to embark on a *tour de force* account of the relationship between sport and religion. He draws on Alan Guttman's seven factors of how modernization has affected sport (in Guttman's book *From Ritual to Record*), but also discusses sport's commodification, its preoccupation with winning (citing Vince Lombardi's famous quip that "winning isn't the most important thing; it's the only thing"). Eventually, he even considers the distinction between religion and spirituality and how each relates to sport. In the end he concludes that "Today sport can only be saved by love; sport can only become sport and the athlete an embodiment of excellence when athlete and fan alike discover that divine love is intrinsic and essential to every contest, game or match."

George D.Bond has long shared his interest in Theravāda with Chuck. George has been on the Northwestern University faculty about as long as Chuck has been at Penn State. During their early years as young Buddhist Studies faculty members, at a time when there weren't very many people teaching Buddhism in the United States, they had many fruitful discussions about the discipline, and shared a similar vision—one that they were able to implement when they co-founded the Buddhism "Group" of the American Academy of Religion. Their professional friendship has endured for more than three decades as they both find themselves among the most senior scholars in the field. As his take-off point in "The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement's double legacy," George Bond uses Sallie King's suggestion that engaged Buddhism has a "double legacy." That double legacy is traditional insofar as it draws on the ethical traditions of Buddhism, but it is also modernist in engaging social, political, and economic issues in specific places. With that in mind, Bond explores Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, but argues that it has a somewhat more complex identity. Perhaps the major question to be considered is to what extent the movement expresses the Sinhala Buddhist perspective and to what extent it might break free of that perspective and function as a truly engaged Buddhist movement.

John P.Keenan is another graduate of the Buddhist Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin. Combining a strong interest in the Chinese Buddhist tradition with a deep personal Christian faith, John Keenan has continually crossed boundaries. It has been this "double bond" of boundary crossing and institutional affiliation that has kept John Keenan and Chuck communicating through the years. Chuck has often said that every

American Academy of Religion annual meeting is always heightened by the fact that he knows, sooner or later, he's going to run into John Keenan and learn something new and exciting from him. In "The genesis of all our dependently arisen histories: the divine plan of creation," John Keenan utilizes the Buddhist notion of dependent origination to frame his thoughts on creation across Judeo-Christian tradition. He draws on Western scripture and his understanding of culture at the outset, but moves on to a Buddhist critique of creation, a Mahāyāna reading of Genesis, and concludes with a Mahāyāna understanding of creation and salvation history.

Chuck has known Donald K.Swearer longer than anyone contributing to this volume, both personally and by reputation. When Chuck was first discovering Buddhism in Cleveland in 1965, Don Swearer was beginning a five-year stint as an Assistant Professor at Oberlin College, not far down the road. Moreover, Don knew Chuck's first mentor, David Miller, quite well, and was frequently cited by Miller as a sign of just what one could do in the emerging field of Buddhist Studies. For Chuck, Donald Swearer's work has always been inspirational, not only for its brilliance in scope and concept, but also because Chuck has felt that Donald Swearer is one of the grandest, kindest, and most respectful colleagues one could have; someone who represented the very best of what Buddhist Studies could, and should, be. Donald Swearer has studied the work of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu for very many years, as the beginning of his chapter "The ecumenical vision of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and his dialogue with Christianity" reveals. This chapter, from his "2547 Spirit in Education Movement" lecture which was coincident with his retirement following a long career at Swarthmore College, reflects Swearer's thoughts not only on Buddhadasa's dialogue with Christianity, but on his own dialogue with Buddhism. In this chapter we receive the double delight of not only Buddhadasa's notions but Swearer's as well. Swearer provides an interesting elucidation of Buddhadasa's phrase "no religion" in terms of its pedagogical, ethical, epistemological, and ontological aspects. In addition there is a consideration of Buddhadasa's deconstruction of the figure of the Buddha, as well as a discussion of the notion that "a good Buddhist is necessarily a good Christian." Swearer concludes with his own suggestion that "a good Christian is necessarily a good Buddhist."

The editor expresses his gratitude to the contributors to this volume for their willingness and good spirit throughout the process, and for their patience along the way. In addition, I offer much thanks to RoutledgeCurzon and its publisher, Malcolm Campbell, for supporting this volume in honor of our good friend Charles Prebish and for his work supporting continuing publication in Buddhist Studies throughout the world.

Part I
VINAYA STUDIES AND ETHICS

1
DŌGEN AND THE PRECEPTS, REVISITED

Steven Heine

> When doing *zazen*, what precepts are not upheld, and what merits are not produced?
>
> (Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*)

Dōgen's view in relation to Chinese Ch'an

In the course of an illustrious career, Charles Prebish has been known for innovation and advancement in numerous areas of scholarly inquiry as well as in ways of disseminating scholarship. These range from his seminal work on the *Vinaya* to Buddhist ethics in a broader sense and from helping establish the fields of American Buddhism and comparative studies of religion and sport to exploring the uses of internet technology in developing and distributing the results of research. Perhaps the best-known and most enduring element of Prebish's remarkable legacy is the translation and examination of the role of the precepts in relation to monastic regulations or *Vinaya*, as demonstrated by his first book on *Buddhist Monastic Discipline* and more recent publications.[1]

In the spirit of Prebish's legacy, this chapter evaluates the role of the precepts in the approach to the theory and practice of Dōgen (1200–1253), founder of the Sōtō (Chin. *Ts'ao-tung*) Zen sect during the early Kamakura era, when Chinese Ch'an of the Sung dynasty was first being transmitted to Japan. Dōgen's view of the precepts is particularly interesting for what it indicates about his relation to the Ch'an Five Mountains (Chin. *Wu-shan,* Jap. *Gozan*) monastic institution, as well as early Zen predecessors and rivals, in addition to the Japanese Tendai school, from which the Zen movement emerged as an independent sect.

One of the most important factors is that there seems to be a fundamental inconsistency in how Dōgen appropriated and applied the precepts in creating his own monastic system at his two main temples. These are Kōshōji temple in Kyoto, where he was the founding abbot from 1233 to 1243 when he moved from the capital to the remote mountains of Echizen province, and Eiheiji temple established in 1244 (originally called Daibutsuji until the name was changed in 1246), of which Dōgen remained abbot until his death. At some point—it is not clear when this was initiated although it was apparently in operation during the later years of the Eiheiji period—Dōgen began advocating a new system of administering 16-article precepts *(jūrokujōkai)*.

Dōgen's system includes three main items: (1) the three jewels or refuges (taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, *Sangha*); (2) the three pure precepts (not sustaining evil,

sustaining good, liberating sentient beings); and (3) the ten major or heavy precepts (not to kill, not to steal, not to lie, not to commit sexual acts, not to partake of intoxicants, not to defame male and female monastics or lay followers, not to covet, not to resist praising others, not to be stirred to anger, not to revile the three treasures).[2] This system seems to differ significantly from what other schools in China and Japan, both Ch'an/Zen and non-Zen (Tendai, Pure Land, Nichiren), were performing. Various Buddhist schools administered either additional or a different set of precepts, or dispensed with the behavioral codes altogether.

Sōtō tradition has long indicated that Dōgen's system was based on the precepts he received directly from Chinese Ch'an mentor Ju-ching as part of the transmission process held several months after his enlightenment experience of casting off body-mind *(shinjin datsuraku)* attained during the summer retreat of 1225. According to the main sectarian biography, the *Kenzeiki* of 1472, and other traditional sources, in the fifth month Dōgen began face-to-face transmission *(menju)* with Ju-ching and recording conversations with his mentor that are included in the *Hōkyōki*.[3] His enlightenment was confirmed by Ju-ching at the time of a visit to the abbot's quarters one night in the seventh month, and Dōgen was invited to be appointed temple attendant, but as a foreigner, he declined this offer, according to a passage in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*, deferring instead to native Chinese monks.[4]

On the eighteenth day of the ninth month, Dōgen received the special version of the bodhisattva precepts, according to the colophon of the *Busso shōden bosatsu kaisahō*.[5] This would have been Dōgen's third precept ceremony. It followed his initiation into the Japanese Tendai school on the tenth day of the tenth month of 1213 under Kōen at Kaidanin hall of Enryakuji temple as well as the ceremony conducted at the time of receiving the seal of transmission *(inka)* from Myōzen in the Huang-lung (Jap. Ōryū) stream of the Lin-chi (Jap. Rinzai) Ch'an school at Kenninji temple in Kyoto in 1221. This was two years before the travels of Dōgen and Myōzen to China.

As a Tendai novice, Dōgen would likely have received the 58-article bodhisattva precepts spelled out in the *Fan-wang ching* (Jap. *Bonmōkyō*, in *Taishō*, vol. 24, no. 1484) that included the ten-article major precepts listed above in addition to the 48-article minor precepts. The *Fan-wang ching* attributed to Kumārajīva was not a translation of an Indian original but was composed in China based on eight-principle scriptural sources, which were *sūtras* all translated into Chinese between the third and fifth centuries.[6] Since the time of Saichō, the Japanese Tendai school had abandoned the 250-article *Prātimokṣa* (or so-called Hīnayāna) precepts that were generally required in China and still administered in Nara temples. However, since Dōgen was only 14 and the Tendai tradition established by Saichō called for the precepts to be administered not before the age of 20, it is possible that he only received the ten Mañjuśrī precepts of the *śrāmaṇera* as delineated in the *Wen-shu-shih-li wen-ching* (*Taishō,* vol. 14, no. 468).[7] It is very likely that the bodhisattva ceremony for Dōgen at Mt. Hiei was either more or less duplicated or adapted to Dōgen's level of seniority at Kenninji, which was founded by Eisai who established the Rinzai sect in Japan in 1202 as a branch temple of Tendai Taimitsu with an emphasis on meditation.

Did Dōgen learn the system of 16-article precepts from Ju-ching? According to the *Hōkyōki* (sections 5 and 49), Ju-ching allowed the Japanese novice to occupy the bodhisattva-*śīla* seat, indicating that his years of living under Japanese Tendai were

accepted as legitimate qualifications even though he lacked the necessary Ch'an credentials and would not have been considered a monk by typical standards. As will be explained below, this would have been an extraordinary phenomenon in the Chinese Ch'an circle of the period, and was far different to the treatment that Dōgen received under then abbot Wu-chi when he first visited Mt. T'ien-t'ung in 1223. Since Dōgen's case already differed from the accepted procedure for the transmission of the precepts within the Chinese Ch'an community, was it possible that Ju-ching transmitted a distinct set of precepts to Dōgen, different from the styles used in both countries? The *Hōkyōki* passages are quite vague and ambiguous about the use of the term "bodhisattva precepts" and whether this refers to a general sense of Mahāyāna practice or specific behavioral codes.

In considering these issues, however, it seems to be a highly dubious claim that Dōgen was instructed in the 16-article precepts by his Chinese mentor. Recently, a document with 16-article precepts was found in Shorenin, a Tendai temple in Kyoto, so that there is some possibility that Dōgen's approach to having 16 articles is based on one of the Tendai precepts styles. It is also possible to speculate that in non-Zen Buddhist schools as well as Tendai in Japan there were different combinations, including the ten-article major precepts along with such expressions of devotion as the three refuges, the three pure precepts, and ritual repentances, an arrangement which is very close to Dōgen's approach.[8] If the 48-article minor precepts were eliminated, it may be that these were very general, open-ended exhortations for compassionate attitudes rather than rules governing behavior in the strict sense; they would therefore have been easily dispensable once the six articles of the refuges and pure precepts were accepted. However, it is doubtful that these combinations would have been considered, before Dōgen, to be monk-making in the sense of conferring legitimacy to a new member of the monastic community.

The primary point is that as a Ch'an monk in the Ts'ao-tung school who was then abbot of Mt. T'ien-t'ung, one of the highly ranked temples in the Five Mountains monastic institution, Ju-ching no doubt adhered to a tradition that was spelled out in Tsung-che's *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* (Jap. *Zen'en shingi*) of 1103. The *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei*, which was the authoritative text of rules and regulations in the Ch'an school supposedly based on a source text attributed to Pai-chang (but no doubt apocryphal) from the early ninth century, required the combined precepts for all monks.[9] This is unambiguously enunciated in the first two sections of the first fascicle covering "Receiving the Precepts" and "Upholding the Precepts."

The combined system included the 250-article *Prātimokṣa* precepts as spelled out in the *Ssu-fen lü* (Jap. *Shibunritsu*, in *Taishō*, vol. 22, no. 1428) that were to be received as a prerequisite for the 58-article Mahāyāna (bodhisattva) precepts. It is confirmed in the writings of Eisai, who traveled to China over 30 years before Dōgen, that the combined system was strictly followed in the Five Mountains monasteries. As T.Griffith Foulk explains,

> To become a fully ordained monk *(ta-seng)*, a novice had to receive the full 250 precepts from a *Vinaya* master at a government-approved ordination platform. Full ordination was a requirement for training in the

> *sangha* halls of Ch'an monasteries and all other public monasteries in the Sung.[10]

Perhaps Ju-ching made an exception for the foreign disciple in not requiring the *Prātimokṣa* precepts before he entered training, but it is nearly impossible to imagine that he would have created a new system of transmission just for Dōgen's benefit. Kagamishima Genryū, one of the leading Dōgen scholars of the postwar period, suggests that Dōgen himself came up with a way of streamlining and simplifying the precept system in order to break free from the hegemony of the Japanese Tendai school. Kagamishima points out that there is no record of the transmission of the 16 articles in the history of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism, nor were they ever mentioned in either *Ju-ching yü-lu* or any other Ch'an text.[11] Kagamishima observes that it would have been exceptional for Ju-ching to recognize Dōgen's status but highly unlikely that this would have also meant a change of the Ch'an precept system:

> What Ju-ching did reflects that he understood the position of the Japanese bodhisattva precepts through Dōgen and expressed his own agreement [with it]. Nevertheless, Ju-ching's recognition of the position of Japanese bodhisattva precepts is not tantamount to the negation of the combined precepts as accepted by the Chinese Ch'an tradition. It would have been impossible for Ju-ching to retransmit the *śrāmaṇera* precepts to Dōgen, who already had received the bodhisattva precepts.[12]

Key to Kagamishima's argument is that Dōgen himself formulated a new approach because he did not have the personal experience needed to be able to require the combined precepts for his disciples. Dōgen never received the 250-article *Prātimokṣa* precepts either in Japan before he went to China or while he was visiting the mainland from 1223 to 1227. Although Myōzen was encouraged by Eisai to receive the *Prātimokṣa* precepts by traveling to Nara, he would not have had permission to administer the combined precepts at Kenninji. Despite Eisai's strong advocacy for the practice that he experienced in China, as a new temple Kenninji would not have been able to administer the *Prātimokṣa* precepts. Nara temples were the only sites actively handling the Hīnayāna precepts in Japan. Kenninji was still considered a branch temple of the main Tendai center at Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei, which was resistant to change and reluctant to accept new procedures and practices, even as fledgling movements were beginning to flourish at the start of the Kamakura era. Myōzen had gone to Tōdaiji in Nara to receive the complete precepts *(gusokukai)* of Hīnayāna as early as 1199, at the age of 16, before taking the bodhisattva precepts *(bosatsukai)* at Enryakuji some years later. His pilgrimage to Nara, perhaps made at Eisai's prodding, was not directly related to an anticipation of the trip taken with Dōgen.

One question frequently asked is: Why did Dōgen not prepare for the trip to China by making a stop at Nara to receive the *Prātimokṣa* precepts?[13] From listening to Myōzen who gained transmission (though not the Hīnayāna precepts) from Eisai, Dōgen must have become aware of the requirement in China. Even if we are somewhat skeptical of

the account of Myōzen, which presumes that the precepts were available in Nara for the asking from a temple that was still in an intense rivalry with Enryakuji,[14] once Dōgen reached the mainland, the lack of combined precepts caused numerous delays and tribulations. Unlike Myōzen, he was not given permission to enter China for a couple of months after his arrival at the port in the fourth month of 1223, and so he was not able to join the Mt. T'ien-t'ung retreat that first summer. Arriving in China without the combined precepts meant that as a novice Dōgen barely ranked above scores of irregular, itinerant practitioners who roamed the various temples. Once he disembarked in the fifth month of 1223, after the summer retreat had already gotten underway, it is not clear how or why Dōgen was accepted into Mt. T'ien-t'ung. Perhaps it was due to Myōzen's intercession or to a petition filed by Dōgen, as some sources suggest.

Shortly after he joined the monastery, another procedural issue led to Dōgen filing an official challenge to the monastic system (see Figure 1.1) in an appeal that, according to the *Kenzeiki*, went all the way up to the imperial level for review.[15] Apparently, once Dōgen's precepts were accepted, as alluded to in *Hōkyōki*, number 49, which mentions a similar preceding case, he still felt dissatisfied with the seniority system practiced in China. This system was based on age rather than on the length of time passed since the precepts were received, as indicated in the classic monastic rules attributed to Pai-chang, the *Ch'an-men kuei-shih,* which was the precursor of the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei*



Figure 1.1 Traditional view of Dōgen’s challenge (*Teiho Kenzeiki zue*, 1806).

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Dōgen’s ten years of experience in Japan indicated that he had a claim to seniority, despite lacking the Hīnayāna precepts. Because of the Chinese custom, however, he was subordinated to novices and was below the rank of any of the newcomers who had the combined precepts. Dōgen lost the appeal because other Japanese monks visiting China had endured the same treatment. There are even indications that two years later, Ju-ching,

who generally favored his aspiring young Japanese disciple, requested that he line up with the Taoists and other non-Buddhist practitioners behind the regular monks and nuns.[16] At the same time, Dōgen, like Ju-ching, was becoming very much concerned about the corruption and laxity in personal habits (such as long hair and fingernails) he witnessed among some of the monks in China, as reported in the *Hōkyōki, Shōbōgenzō zuimonki,* and *Shōbōgenzō* "Gyōji" fascicle.

In any case, Dōgen's approach is not only something that could not have been realistically transmitted by Ju-ching, but it also went against the grain of both the Ch'an school and the approach Eisai brought back from China and established in Japan. In fact, the issue of the precepts is the single area where Dōgen's religiosity diverges rather drastically from Chinese Ch'an. In many other respects, from constructing the first monks' hall at Kōshōji to delivering the first formal sermons *(jōdō)* in Japan at both of his temples, Dōgen's role was to serve as a vehicle for the reproduction, with some variation and accommodation to new cultural terrain, of the Five Mountains style of monastic life based on the teachings of the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei*. The fact that Dōgen cites extensively from this source, including in the opening passage of the "Jukai" fascicle, the main text that articulates the 16-article precept method, seems to call further attention to the basic inconsistency concerning Dōgen's relation to Chinese Ch'an.[17]

Dōgen's relation to Japanese Tendai and Zen

This section examines more fully how Dōgen's experiences in China are related to the background of Japanese Buddhist trends out of which his unique approach sprang, including the Tendai school and the new Zen movements of Eisai and Dainichi Nōnin. As Ishii Shūdō (1991) and Bernard Faure (1987) have pointed out, Dōgen's writings cannot be seen in isolation but must be understood as part of a dialogue—or perhaps "quadrilogue"—with predecessors and rivals.

Nōnin founded the third, yet short-lived, early Zen school, the controversial Daruma school that tended to negate the need for the precepts altogether. The Daruma school began in the 1180s and was proscribed in 1194 by the government, supported by the Tendai school. Eisai, who was grouped with the Daruma school as another follower of Bodhidharma (Jap. Bodaidaruma), also suffered from the prohibition, as Hōnen and his disciples would suffer a similar prohibition and exile in 1207.

The Daruma school was repudiated by all parties, including Eisai and Dōgen, for its antinomian implications in such sayings as "There are no practices [to follow], no cultivation [to engage in]. From the outset there are no mental defilements; from the beginning we are enlightened."[18] According to Nōnin, "Precepts exist for preventing the appearance of the [deluded] mind. The lack of the [deluded] mind is superior to the precepts."[19] However, Nōnin's view is not so simplistic because in response to a query about whether "moral precepts and monastic rituals are of no use," he responds that this is the view of "nihilists" and that "One must not talk with such people nor even sit with them."[20] The Daruma school continued to produce followers until 1241, when the remaining monks all left the Tendai school's Hajakuji temple in Echizen province to join Dōgen at Kōshōji and then accompanied his relocation to Echizen two years later.

Eisai had the ban against him lifted a few years later with the publication in 1198 of the apologetic tract, the *Kōzen gokokuron,* which used the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* as a tool to demonstrate the rigorous self-discipline inherent in his approach to Zen as a means of "protecting the country." The preface of the treatise opens with an iteration of the importance of "Buddhist rules governing moral behavior *(kairitsu)* taking precedence over the practice of Zen."[21] Furthermore, "Moral precepts and monastic discipline cause Buddhism to flourish forever…[and] are the essence of Zen."[22] Although he attracted Daruma school disciples, who constituted the main body of his followers at Eiheiji, Dōgen needed to free himself of Nōnin's antinomian tendencies. Antinomianism was an insidious ideology that was perhaps more of a temptation or threat in the context of Japanese Buddhism, which was dominated by esotericism and eclecticism, than in China, with its moralistic Confucian orientation.[23]

When Dōgen first became a Tendai monk and at age 13 experienced what the *Kenzeiki* refers to as the "doubt" about the need for continuing practice in light of the presence of the universal Buddha-nature, the dominant system of Tendai bodhisattva precepts was referred to as *endonkai* ("complete and sudden precepts").[24] This view represented a notion very close to the idea of "formless precepts" endorsed in the *Platform Sūtra,* which was also known in Japan as the "one-mind precepts" or *isshinkai.*[25] According to this approach, the *Prātimokṣa* was designed to regulate the outer behavior of monks in training, whereas in the Tendai and early Ch'an view this concern was relegated to the level of ordinary or relative truth. From the standpoint of absolute or ultimate truth, there is a full internalization of the precepts, which altogether vitiates the need for external guidelines expressed in the *Prātimokṣa* or allows them to be seen merely as a kind of metaphorical reflection of what is essentially an interior state of mind. Therefore, the bodhisattva instructions, which were more abstract and far less specific, were considered sufficient.

Even though early Chinese Ch'an sources seemed to agree with Japanese Tendai on this issue, as indicated above, Eisai found during his journey to the mainland that the reigning practice of the preceptual transmission was different than he expected. To qualify for admission to the *sangha,* a Ch'an novice was required to adhere to the three-article refuges, the five-article *upāsaka* precepts, and ten-article *śrāmaṇera* precepts before receiving the *Prātimokṣa's* 250-article *bhikkhu* precepts and the 58-article bodhisattva precepts at the age of 20. Neither the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* nor the practice at Five Mountains temples gave an indication of the formless-precept position.

When Dōgen left Japan in 1223 with doubts concerning the efficacy of the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment there was still no "pure Zen" *(junsui Zen)* temple, as opposed to a "mixed Zen" *(kenju Zen)* style of training that incorporated esoteric rites, or an acceptance of Zen as an autonomous sect. The Daruma school, subject to ongoing persecution that included the destruction of its temples by Tendai mercenaries, had become a kind of underground cult with adherents in a couple of temples in the Yamato and Echizen areas. Yet the school persisted, in part by joining forces with Sōtō Zen when Dōgen moved to Echizen. Faure takes this point a step further by arguing that the connection to the Daruma school caused a sea change in Dōgen's religiosity:

> This collective conversion changed dramatically the nature of Dōgen's teachings and decided the future of the Sōtō sect. Not only was Dōgen's criticism of the Rinzai tradition a direct result of his desire to convince his new audience of the superiority of his brand of Zen, but his sudden transfer to remote Echizen in 1243, and the subsequent sectarian stiffening of his doctrine, were due in part to the fact that the Daruma-*shū* had a strong following in that province.[26]

According to a prominent theory, there remained affiliates of the Daruma school until the period of the Ōnin War of 1466–1467, when much of Zen monasticism, including powerful elements of the elite Japanese Five Mountains system, was damaged in the political upheaval.

The Daruma school came under fire from both the Tendai authorities and Eisai's fledgling Rinzai school for several practical as well as ideological reasons. Nōnin was so discredited that he was given just a brief mention in historical materials of the period, particularly Kokan Shiren's *Genkō shakusho* of 1372. The only extant complete biographical sketch is from the Tokugawa era, and it provides only a bare outline of some of the key events.[27] Since Nōnin did not travel to China and therefore did not receive direct Dharma transmission from a Ch'an master, the Buddhist institutional hierarchy never considered his self-enlightenment-based credentials acceptable. He was not exposed to, and so was not a useful vehicle for, the dissemination of the kinds of texts that were representative of the dynamic new style of Sung dynasty Ch'an religious discourse.

Some of the works Nōnin cited were apocryphal, misnamed, or associated with the Bodhidharma-based Northern school that was repudiated by the Southern school of Ch'an following the emergence of the *Platform Sūtra* constructed by Shen-hui and attributed to Hui-neng. Lacking pedigree, Nōnin's familiarity with Ch'an was probably limited to works from an era well before the iconoclastic Hung-chou school teachings of Ma-tsu and Lin-chi were incorporated into Sung transmission of the lamp records and *kōan* collections. Northern school ideology had been kept barely alive in Japan by Saichō's lineage. Its texts, which had long existed in Japan but were ignored before Nōnin dealt with these works, did not enjoy a glorious revival based on the fact that he was citing them.

Nōnin's reliance on outdated or questionable materials encouraged rivals to consider him unorthodox and irregular. Despite the linear connection that two of his followers who were sent to China on his behalf gained with the Ta-hui branch that advocated the practice of kōan-introspection *(kanna-Zen),* Nōnin was unable to contribute to Zen the transmission of ingenious *kōan* collections. *Kōans* were based on encounter dialogues attributed to T'ang masters and led to a distinctive style of training that featured charismatic sermons and insightful commentaries. Therefore, Nōnin did not bring a sense of scriptural authority or creativity to the Buddhist scene at a time of intense competition from other upstart religious movements which were all under pressure from the Tendai mainstream to demonstrate their value to the state in addition to doctrinal orthodoxy. However, Nōnin created his own texts, notably the recently discovered *Jōtō shōgakuron,* which is of great historical interest for what it reveals about early Zen's relation to

Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Tendai, in addition to the *Hōmon taikō* and the *Kenshō jōbutsuron*.[28]

Even though prohibited by the Tendai school, in many respects the metaphysics of equalizing the absolute and phenomenal realms in Nōnin's thought was not so dissimilar from the basic Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment, which asserted that sentient beings and all other aspects of existence innately possess the absolute nature. The Daruma school could be seen as an extension of the Tendai doctrine of *endonkai* (perfect and sudden precepts), which dispensed with the need for the *Prātimokṣa* precepts and was sometimes associated with lax moral tendencies, such as the "passions are awakening" *(bonnō soku bodai)* outlook that gave rise to so-called "evil monks" *(akusō).*

The arguments of the *Kōzen gokokuron,* based on establishing a link between T'ien-t'ai/Tendai and Zen, were successful in repudiating the Daruma school and having the injunction of 1194 lifted in Eisai's case. The text maintained that *zazen* was utilized by Saichō based on the teachings of Chih-i, so that Eisai was simply reintroducing a long-lost Japanese practice. As Albert Welter shows, stemming from what he learned in China from the Fa-yen branch Ch'an teachings, "Eisai's whole presumption [was] of Zen as both the lost source and the fulfillment of Tendai teaching."[29]

Both Eisai and Dōgen made a commitment to the continuing practice *(shugyō)* of *zazen,* or rigorous, sustained training in meditative discipline during shorter as well as more prolonged sessions monitored by monastic leaders to test the determination and dedication of the monks. They also advocated the role of monastic rules or *shingi* (Chin, *ch'ing-kuei*) based on the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei,* which were unique to the Zen system yet complemented the traditional *Vinaya* requirements in regulating nearly every aspect of the daily routine as well as ceremonial occasions and administrative

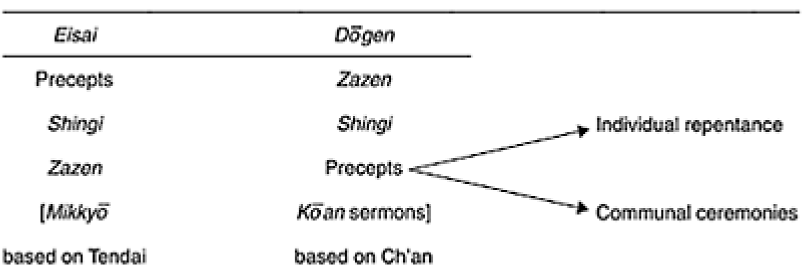


Figure 1.2 Comparison of Eisai's and Dōgen's religious priorities.

hierarchy in a Chinese context. However, they disagreed somewhat on the priority of these practices in relation to the precepts. Figure 1.2 sums up the differences in their views (with the fourth item listed referring to other main priorities in the respective visions of religiosity.

In all three areas, Nōnin fell short of providing consistent guidelines or instructions. By contrast, Eisai was an adamant proponent of both *zazen* and the precepts, which he felt would compensate for any laxity or corruption among the monks. Dōgen was a strong supporter of monastic rules, which he considered essential for establishing a Sung-style

religious community, as a necessary context for the practice of meditation. While Eisai and Dōgen agreed on the role of *zazen* and are in fundamental accord about the need for self-discipline and communal regulations, they disagreed on the degree of importance of the precepts. A fourth area indicated above in square brackets is a discrepancy between Eisai's emphasis on esoteric rites and Dōgen's introduction of *kōan*-based sermons.

The tendency of the Daruma school to forgo the need for *zazen* as well as the precepts and *Vinaya* (Skt. *śtla-vinaya,* Jap. *kai-ritsu*) was referred to in Dōgen's early writings, especially *Bendōwa* and "Sokushin zebutsu," which was the fourth fascicle of the 75-fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō* to be completed during the 1230s, as the "naturalist heresy" (or Senika heresy, *senni-gedō*).[30] According to Dōgen, this is the deficient view, which represents a throwback to pre-Buddhist *ātman* philosophy affirming a soul unaffected by change as well as an emphasis on the natural occurrence of enlightenment, of its own accord, in all aspects of phenomenal reality, without the need for authentication by cultivating the spiritual prowess of the mind. Two of the 18 dialogues in the second part of *Bendōwa* are dedicated to an indirect refutation of the Daruma school.[31] Like Eisai, Dōgen does not designate Nōnin directly as the target of criticism, perhaps because the school was too controversial even to be mentioned.

Another key figure in early Zen is Enni Ben'en, who, like Eisai and Dōgen, started his career as a Tendai monk (at Onjōji or Miidera temple rather than Enryakuji) and then traveled to the Five Mountains temples in China in search of genuine Ch'an. During a journey that lasted for nearly seven years, from 1235 to 1241, Enni trained at Wan-shou ch'an-szu monastery on Mt. Ching, the highest ranked of the Five Mountains temples, when it was in full flower as the institutional flagship. He received transmission from the abbot, Wu-chun Shih-fan, who presented Enni with a precious portrait of himself and samples of his calligraphy. After his return, in 1243 he was awarded leadership of the prestigious Tōfukuji temple constructed in the Ch'an style with the support of Fujiwara Michiie, one of the developments that caused Dōgen to leave Kyoto for Echizen.

Well before his journey, Enni had received the *Prātimokṣa* precepts in Nara, but his approach was particularly influenced by Yung-ming Yen-shou's tenth-century *Tsung-ching lu* (Jap. *Shūgyōroku*), which sought to combine Ch'an meditation with chanting and related ritual activities aimed at attaining the Pure Land. Whereas Eisai developed a syncretism at Kenninji known as *Enmitsuzenkai* practice, which was a combination of Tendai bodhisattva precepts *(endonkai),* esoteric precepts *(mitsukai),* and Zen system precepts *(zenkai),* Enni developed an amalgamation of *zazen* and *nembutsu*. According to Enni, "Zen is the Buddha mind. The precepts (morality) are its external form; the teachings are its explanation in words; the invocation of the name *(nembutsu)* is an expedient means [Skt. *upāya,* Jap. *hōben*]."[32]

Table 1.1 provides a comparison of six different approaches to the precepts in Dōgen's era in Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Buddhism. Dōgen not only differed from the Ch'an Five Mountains system, but he was also at variance with the approach endorsed by the Rinzai school's temples in Japan, which followed Eisai's combined precepts, as well as the internalization approach of the formless or one-mind precepts. The main question in evaluating Dōgen's approach is whether the system of 16-article precepts, devoid of the *Prātimokṣa* instructions, represented a compromise position between the full precepts and no precepts that was created out of determination to prevent a collapse of behavioral codes into an amorphous oneness or whether it was based on

Table 1.1 Evaluating Dōgen's compromise view

School	*Number of precepts*	*Main text*
Five Mountains Ch'an	3+5+10+250+58	*Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* (1103)
Early Ch'an	Formless—*isshinkai*	*Platform Sūtra* (early eighth century)
Japanese Tendai	58 (10+48)—*endonkai*	*Fan-wang ching* (n.d.)
Nōnin (Daruma Zen)	None required	*Jōtō shōgakuron* (1186?)
Eisai (Rinzai Zen)	250+58—*gusokukai*	*Kōzen gokokuron* (1198)
Dōgen (Sōtō Zen)	16 (3+3+10)—*jukai*	*Shōbōgenzō "Jukai"* (1250?)

confusion and convenience. At the same time, perhaps there is a simple explanation in that Dōgen may well have incorporated and institutionalized a streamlined approach that was at least being discussed in non-Ch'an circles in both China and Japan, even if not considered monk-making. But why?

Furthermore, if Dōgen's view is to be considered a constructive compromise, which left him varying with both Chinese and Japanese Buddhist schools, was this closer to the Five Mountains approach (both the Chinese and Japanese versions) of combined precepts? Or was it similar to the Tendai and early Ch'an tendencies toward an internalization of the precepts that was also endorsed in an extreme form by Nōnin? According to the latter view, a realization of the essential meaning underlying specific perceptual instructions vitiates the need for receiving them. In any case, it is a different compromise than the respective syncretistic approaches of Eisai and Enni in the Rinzai sect.

Sōtō theologian Kurebayashi Kōdō asserts that Dōgen leaned to the side of an internalization of the precepts, although he of course would not want to associate the sect's founder with Nōnin's antinomianism:

> Dōgen's view of Three Fundamental Precepts—respectively, "holding onto all precepts," "practicing all good deeds," and "saving all sentient beings completely"—transcends their traditional understanding, transforming them into three aspects of the Buddha-mind or Buddha-nature, so that no perceptual deportment is required. The natural revelation of the one mind of self-nature is itself composed of good deeds, so the self-awakening of the one mind of Buddha-nature originally inherent [in the bodhisattva] is itself [the act of] saving sentient beings. Simultaneously, both the receiving and observing of the precepts is naturally transformed into non-defiled practice reflecting the wondrous cultivation of original realization, and the Triple Refuge is none other than the three treasures of the one mind of self-nature. In short, the so-called 10-article major precepts and 16-article preceptual items and other preceptual forms are ultimately "the precepts of one mind," that is, there are no precepts aside from the self-awakening and self-revelation of the original and authentic Buddha-nature within sentient beings.[33]

While agreeing with Kurebayashi that, although Dōgen's approach is not consistent with Chinese Ch'an, this does not necessarily mean that his view is deficient or contradictory, I disagree with his conclusion that sees Dōgen as exemplary of the formless precepts, or what Kurebayashi refers to as "no precepts." It seems that by reducing the number and by simplifying the method for administering the precepts, Dōgen was seeking a middle way position between the combined precepts and formless precepts views. In that regard, it should be noted that Dōgen did not use the term *"zen-kai"* a later invention within the sect, which is sometimes considered to imply that "Zen and the precepts are one," as suggested by the term *zenkai itchi*. Dōgen's avoidance of extreme positions is indicated in the following passage from the *Eihei kōroku* collection of Dōgen's *jōdō* sermons, number 5.390, which is a lengthy piece that begins with a discussion of the difference between breathing exercises in Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna styles of meditation. Dōgen remarks that if asked about this:

> I would simply say, although it is not the Greater Vehicle, it differs from the Lesser Vehicle. Although it is not the Lesser Vehicle, it differs from the Greater Vehicle. Suppose that questioner inquires again, "Ultimately, what is it?" I would say, exhaling and inhaling are neither long nor short.[34]

Dōgen's discussion concludes by rejecting both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna views on meditation and leads into a consideration of the passage in the *Ch'an-men kuei-shih* attributed to Ch'an patriarch Pai-chang, which asserts that neither of the two vehicles alone is appropriate for providing the rules for the governing of the Zen sect. When asked if Zen is to follow the precepts according to the Hīnayāna teachings or to adhere to the *sūtras* that express the Mahāyāna precepts, Pai-chang replies:

> For our sect, the guiding principles should not be constrained to follow strictly the rules according to either the Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna teachings; nor should they totally disregard them. Rather, we must seek a middle ground that synthesizes the spirit of these teachings without being limited to either approach in establishing regulations that are most appropriate to our style of practice.[35]

Dōgen comments that this view does not reflect his own approach, in that he strives not for synthesis but for a transcendence of the distinction between the vehicles. With the use of double negatives and characteristic wordplay, Dōgen rewrites Pai-chang's response:

> Pai-chang said it this way, but Eihei [I] is certainly not like this. I do not follow the Hīnayāna teachings, nor do I not disregard them. What is the Lesser Vehicle? It means that the donkey has not yet taken off. What is the Greater Vehicle? It means that the horse has not yet arrived. Having nothing to increase means that the greatest vehicle is the same as the least vehicle; having nothing to decrease means that the least vehicle is the same as the greatest vehicle. My approach does not seek to synthesize, but to cast off the very distinction between Lesser and Greater Vehicles.

This I have already done. What more can I say?[36]

The sermon record indicates that a lengthy pause ensued—leaving time for discussion or debate with the assembly of monks, which was not recorded—after which Dōgen makes a pithy final comment: "When healthy I do *zazen* without rest; when hungry I eat until I am full." Thus, the bottom line for Dōgen is an emphasis on meditation and a relative disregard for precepts and rules. This new policy represents the inverse of the attitude expressed in the *Ch'an-men kuei-shih,* which only mentions the role of *zazen* in passing and leaves it up to individual monks to determine the amount of practice needed. Therefore, Dōgen's aim is to cast off conventional polarization stemming from the proclamation attributed to Pai-chang that Ch'an is a "third way" beyond the distinction of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Dōgen's view is a compromise between the antinomianism of Nōnin and the full precepts method of Eisai, as well as the approaches of Ch'an/Zen and Tendai.

Concluding analysis

This chapter concludes by highlighting four major points in evaluating Dōgen's view of the precepts. The first point concerns differences with Eisai. As opposed to the Pure Land schools which denied the necessity of observing the precepts, a position that Nōnin also ended up with, Eisai and Dōgen at the beginning of the Kamakura era were both on the side of the "primacy of precepts" *(kairitsu-isen)* and of the "unity of meditation and precepts" *(zenkai-itchi)*. The "Jukai" fascicle indicates the priority of precepts, in that enlightenment is attained only in monkhood and by following monastic precepts and rules. However, within these general rubrics, the two early Zen masters differed on a matter of emphasis, with Eisai stressing that practice begins with the precepts while also encompassing training in *zazen* meditation and adherence to monastic regulations.

For Dōgen, *zazen* or just-sitting practice *(shikan-taza)* is the supreme practice and adherence to *shingi* rules is also more significant than the precepts. In the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*, he makes it clear that to value the precepts as being of primary importance over and above the merit of *zazen* is obviously a "mistake" because such a Hīnayānistic view of distinguishing between good and evil is not in accord with the bodhisattva way of non-discrimination and the overcoming of dualistic tendencies. This emphasis on an internalization of the true meaning of the precepts would seem to bring Dōgen close to the charge of antinomianism that Eisai refuted in Nōnin's thought.

The second point is that Dōgen's view of *zazen* was created with reference to the preceptual issue, as Dōgen was keenly aware of the dangers of being perceived as dismissive of the precepts. Perhaps the most famous passage in this regard is in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* from around 1236. Dōgen was responding to a query from his head monk, Ejō, a former member of the Daruma school who converted to Dōgen's movement in 1234 upon the death of his then mentor, Kakuan, Nōnin's first disciple who advised Ejō on this matter. Ejō asked Dōgen why he eliminated the practice of chanting precepts as stipulated by the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei*. Dōgen indicates that both the precepts and *zazen* should be practiced, but clearly the latter trumps the former: "When doing *zazen*, what precepts are not upheld, and what merits are not produced?"[37] However, Dōgen

composed numerous writings dealing with monastic rules, some of which are included as fascicles in the *Shōbōgenzō,* while others were independent essays grouped together by Tokugawa-era editors in the text known as the *Eihei shingi.*[38] "Of the ninety or more chapters of the *Shōbō genzō,*" Martin Collcutt notes, "nearly a third are devoted wholly or in part to the detailed regulation of such everyday monastic activities as meditation, prayer, study, sleep, dress, the preparation and taking of meals, and bathing and purification."[39] Therefore, the relatively lesser weight ascribed to the precepts by Dōgen does not indicate a lack of strictness or a tendency toward Nōnin-esque antinomianism.

The third area of evaluation concerns another aspect of religiosity that became crucial for Dōgen in his considerations about the precepts, particularly questions of how to practice either after one has violated or before ever taking the precepts. What are the repercussions and chances for forgiveness and redemption for those not in accord with the precepts? Here we find a certain generosity on Dōgen's part, which may be surprising for a master known for severe punishments, such as the unceremonious banishment of disciple Gemmyō, who he felt betrayed the integrity of the *sangha* by accepting a donation from shogun Hōjō Tokiyori under false pretenses.[40]

Dōgen varies from Eisai, who maintains that one who repents for past transgressions and terminates evil behavior can still practice Zen, but that a violation of the ideals of the precepts before having taken them forbids one from becoming a Buddhist. For Dōgen, it was possible to have violated the precepts and yet begin training in *zazen* once repentance had been conducted. Once again, the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* of the mid- to late 1230s is an important source on this issue. The collection of informal sermons and dialogues contains several key passages exploring the issue of repentance in relation to the precepts in response to questions posed by Ejō. Ejō presses the issue of the repercussions for "violating the precepts," and Dōgen responds that this phrase refers to transgressions committed after, rather than before, receiving the precepts. He asserts, "If [the transgressor] repents, he becomes pure," suggesting that a state of penitence is far superior to never having received the precepts in the first place. At the same time, Dōgen indicates that he agrees with Eisai that if one of the grave sins is committed, then the precepts would need to be readministered. This is a Mahāyānistic view that differs from the view of transgressions in the *Prātimokṣa*, in which a major transgression or defeat *(pārājika)* in following the rules means that a monk cannot receive the precepts again.

Furthermore, Dōgen goes further than Eisai in consistently advocating the role of confession and repentance, from the time of his first main writing, *Bendōwa,* and the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* to the 12-fascicle version of the *Shōbōgenzō* composed in the early 1250s. In the middle of this historical arc, in the "Keiseisanshoku" of the 7 5-fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō,* a text written in 1240 shortly before the move to Echizen that is largely a celebration of communion with nature, Dōgen stresses the value of receiving the "invisible assistance of the Buddhas and patriarchs."[41] Therefore, "for those who confess your thoughts and your deeds, disclose yourself in works, and relate them before Buddhas, your sins shall be altogether rooted out."[42] An intriguing question is whether Dōgen approaches the formless repentance theme asserted in the *Platform Sūtra,* which dispenses with the need for specific confessions of concrete misdeeds.

The fourth point about the apparent inconsistency with the Ch'an style of the precepts is that Dōgen's unique approach reveals him as an innovator who sought to develop an independent, autonomous platform for the delivery of the precepts to novices who were

attracted to the new Zen sect. Ultimately, his system proved successful in facilitating the growth of Sōtō Zen and its spread in the Northern provinces, in contrast to the Japanese Five Mountains institution that was associated with the Rinzai sect in Kyoto and Kamakura and remained bound to these primary cities.

William Bodiford argues at the conclusion of his work on *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* that Dōgen's handling of the precepts allowed later generations of Sōtō evangelists operating in Echizen and other regions to break free of the constraints of the old Nara and Kyoto systems, and to control the bestowing of ordination. "Sōtō independence contrasted favorably with the constraints suffered by *Gozan* Zen [the Japanese counterpart of the Chinese system formed in the Rinzai school] in the capital," Bodiford writes, since these temples were continually subject to governmental as well as Tendai school oversight of their rituals and institutional growth.[43] He further points out that in Dōgen's day there were monthly ordination ceremonies for lay believers and that subsequent generations conducted mass ordinations on a regular basis.

Whether or not Dōgen learned the 16-article precepts system from Ju-ching directly, as tradition claims, it seems that he and his followers were able to use this model as a constructive and expansive avenue for promulgating Sōtō Zen.[44] If the bottom line is innovation and institutional growth—rather than, say, strictness or consistency—his approach worked.

Notes

1 Prebish, 1975; and 2003, pp. 45–73; also Prebish deals in passing with the East Asian context in 1993, pp. 49–68.

2 Kim, 1975, pp. 276–277; see also the discussion in Bodiford, 1993, pp. 163–173; Riggs, 2002, p. 179; and Okumura, 2004, pp. 1–3. For a general historial overview of Dōgen's career in Japanese, see Takeuchi, 1992.

3 Kawamura, 1975; and *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 6, pp. 2–51.

4 *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* no. 1.1, in *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 7, p. 52.

5 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 6, p. 212. The *Hōkyōki* is said to have been worked on by Dōgen while he was training at Mt. T'ien-t'ung and it was discussed with monks before and after the ceremony. Another text, originally independent but later grouped with it, the *Busso shōden bosatsukai kyōju kaimon,* is also considered authentic by current Sōtō scholarship. The approach of both texts is confirmed by the *Shōbōgenzō* "Jukai" fascicle, which is undated but was probably composed near the end of Dōgen's life in the early 1250s. However, there is also reason to believe that the record of the date was imposed by fourth patriarch Sōtō master Keizan or later Sōtō followers. The oldest manuscripts of these texts are in the possession of Kōfukuji in Kumamoto. The colophons indicate they were written on June 12, 1325. I am grateful to Ishii Kiyozumi and Hareyama Shun'ei, both of Komazawa University, for a clarification of these points. In addition, a text attributed to a second-generation disciple of Dōgen's, Kyōgō, famed for his commentary on the *Shōbōgenzō,* is known as the *Bonmōkyō ryakushō*. It addresses the set of 58-article bodhisattva precepts in the *Fan-wang ching* and thus is very unlikely to have been penned by Dōgen.

6 Groner, 1984, pp. 215–220; and Sheng Yen, 1994, p. 35.

7 Ōkubo, 1966, pp. 77–78, as noted in Kodera, 1980, p. 147 n. 69.

8 See the discussion in Riggs, 2002, p. 178.

9 See Kagamishima *et al.,* 1972. For an English translation, see Yifa, 2002.

10 Foulk, 1993, p. 161.

11 Kagamishima, 1984, p. 273, as cited in Fu, 1994, pp. 245–276.

12 Furthermore, Dōgen received "the bodhisattva precepts correctly transmitted from the Buddha" from Ju-ching, which refers to the *Fen-wang ching* uncombined bodhisattva precepts, clearly indicating that the position of Japanese Tendai precepts already had been reflected in the case of Ju-ching through Dōgen. See Kagamishima, 1984, pp. 278–279, and 1983; also cited in Fu, 1994.
13 See Heine, 2003, pp. 27–59.
14 As James Kodera notes, "the original document attesting to his having received the Complete Precepts as a mendicant, which Myōzen is said to have taken to China with him, is preserved today in Eiheiji with Dōgen's appendix attached." But Kodera speculates that it may be a forgery because because Dōgen's *Shari sōdenki* does not refer to this event, but he concludes that it likely happened; see Kodera, 1980, p. 30.
15 Nara, 2000, pp. 47–49.
16 See Riggs, 2002, p. 110; based on his reading of a passage in *Shōbōgenzō* "Gyōji," part 2.
17 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 2, pp. 294–299.
18 Cited in an unpublished paper by Ishii, 1992, who points out that Nōnin's attitude was influenced by early Ch'an but resembles Southern school utterances such as "Mind itself is Buddha" attributed to Ma-tsu.
19 Ishii, 1991, p. 708.
20 Cited in De Bary, 2001, p. 315. Yet the editor's introduction to this passage suggests the Daruma school "taught that no monastic discipline was required, since Buddha awakening could be express in any activity," p. 308.
21 The text appears in *Taishō,* vol. 80, no. 2543.
22 Cited in De Bary, 2001, p. 313.
23 While in Zen Ikkyū says, "To enter the realm of Buddha is easy, to enter the realm of Mara is difficult," Shinran declares that, "committing evil acts is no obstacle [for rebirth *(ōjō)*]." Both cases seem to leave open the possibility of a distorted understanding that preceptlessness, or deliberately violating the precepts, can reflect a lofty ideal of transcendence that becomes a rationale for misbehavior in a purely secular sense.
24 Actually the doubt is not referred to in the early versions of the *Kenzeiki* but is only mentioned Menzan's 1753 edition, the *Teiho Kenzeiki,* which is heavily annotated and augmented. See Kawamura, 1975, pp. 7–8.
25 See Faure, 1997, pp. 113–118; and Stone, 1999, p. 19.
26 Faure, 1987, p. 30.
27 Yampolsky, 1988, pp. 140–156. This is based on the *Sesshū Sambōji shamon Nōnin den* of the *Honchō kōsōden,* vol. 19, completed by Mangen Shiban in 1702, 500 years after Nōnin's life. Also, Nichiren's *Kaimokushō* of 1272 mentions and harshly criticizes Nōnin, along with Hōnen, as the two founders of Pure Land and Zen respectively, who are like mice afraid of cats (Tendai and the *Lotus Sūtra*) and this is repeated in the *Kyōki jikoushō* and the *Ankokuron gokan yurai*.
28 See Ishii, 1991, pp. 625–714.
29 Welter, forthcoming.
30 See the discussion in Faure, 1987, pp. 22–55.
31 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 2, pp. 537–556.
32 From Enni's *Shōichi kokushi kana hōgo,* in *Zenmon hōgoshū,* as cited in Dumoulin, 1990, p. 27. Another text attributed to Enni, who was also greatly influenced by Yen-shou, is the *Jisshū yōdōki*. As Carl Bielefeldt notes, this can be compared to *Bendōwa* and *Kōzen gokokuron* in trying to establish the new Zen sect, but differs from the others in not stressing historical identity through continuity with Ch'an in the case of Dōgen or Tendai in the case of Eisai. See Bielefeldt, 2003, pp. 206–207.
33 Kurebayashi, 1963, pp. 232–234.
34 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 3, pp. 260–262.

35 This quote is from Pai-chang's legendary rules text, *Ch'an-men kuei-shih,* included in *Taishō,* vol. 51:250c–251b.
36 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 3, pp. 260–262.
37 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 7, p. 66.
38 Kosaka, 1980, pp. 119–166.
39 Collcutt, 1981, p. 148.
40 A recent Kabuki play entitled *Dōgen no tsuki* idealizes this quasi-historical event.
41 In *Dōgen zenji zenshū,* vol. 1, pp. 274–284.
42 This focus on repentance is accentuated in the "Shushōgi," a Meiji-era (late nineteenth-century) highly abbreviated version of the *Shōbōgenzō* primarily for lay followers of Sōtō Zen; see Heine, 2003, pp. 169–192.
43 Bodiford, 1993, p. 211. In this chapter, Bodiford also gives examples in Japanese Sōtō popular practices of using the precepts as a kind of symbol of sacrality to vanquish demonic forces and convert ghosts and spirits, which recalls such usages found in early Chinese Buddhist sources, including the Northern Ch'an school records as well as the biographies of eminent monks compiled by Tao-hsüan in 645–667, the *Hsü kao-seng chuan,* in which the precepts are often used in rites of overcoming and converting mountain spirits.
44 However, Riggs notes that the Tokugawa-era Sōtō reformer, Menzan Zuihō, advocated a somewhat more mainstream, but still Dōgen-oriented way for precept ritual to be conducted as a condition for practice in the context of the considerable influence exerted by the Ōbaku school precept assemblies encompassing lay and monk participation that were initiated by Yin-yüan. Menzan also wanted to preserve a distinction between precepts for monks and for laity of both sexes, as well as between the conferring of the precepts *(jukai)* and private transmission ceremonies *(denkai).* See Riggs, 2002, p. 190.

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2
BUDDHISM AND THE PRACTICE OF BIOETHICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Robert L.Hood

Introduction

This chapter describes ethical issues in the clinical course of a Burmese monk, Venerable U Sacca Vamsa, who suffered a stroke while he was living in the United States. Primary issues in the case concerned who should make decisions and whether to withdraw care. The case posed difficult ethical issues due to both uncertainty about his wishes and a lack of understanding of his cultural and religious background by healthcare providers. Different understandings of the situation by medical professionals, Western lay Buddhists, and Asian Buddhists led to ethical conflict about both his care and the disposal of his remains. This case identifies the need for monks in the United States to have durable powers of attorney that name healthcare decision-makers, and to communicate their wishes with lay people in advance. While there is an existing body of literature on Buddhism and bioethics, it should include discussion of how Buddhism will contribute to healthcare ethics at a clinical level in America.

Case study

The call came early one Sunday morning: Bhante was in the hospital. Venerable U Sacca Vamsa, known to his followers simply as Bhante (an honorific term of address for Theravāda monks), had been found unconscious in his room at the *vihāra* by other monks, who called for an ambulance, and then called some of his American students. Urgent decisions had to be made. When the American students arrived at the hospital, the neurosurgeon reported that Bhante had suffered a severe stroke. The students were able to provide a medical history for the surgeon: Venerable U Sacca Vamsa was 59 years old, with a history of diabetes, poorly controlled high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, congestive heart failure, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He had undergone a cardiac bypass operation several years earlier. The surgeon indicated that even with surgery, the prognosis was guarded at best. The surgeon wanted to know whether Venerable U Sacca Vamsa would want to proceed with emergency surgery, even though the benefits were uncertain, or whether he would prefer to forgo aggressive measures. Bhante had not talked about his wishes regarding this topic with his students. However, he had previously been in favor of medical intervention in general, and he had been grateful for a heart bypass operation that extended his life and allowed him to continue teaching. The surgery proceeded.

This case is similar to another, that of Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikku, a monk in Thailand.[1] Both monks suffered a stroke requiring immediate surgical attention to insert a shunt to drain fluid, and then post-operative support in an intensive care unit where each

was maintained on artificial respiration and artificial hydration and nutrition. In both cases the physicians believed recovery was possible, and advocated continued aggressive measures. In the next section I will describe the general process of ethical consulting and particular problems in each of the two cases.

Clinical ethics

The first and perhaps most important process in clinical bioethics practice is the initial organization of information into a case or problem. In the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa, events were framed by physicians as diseaserelated processes and not as a natural process signaling the end of his life. McCue believes this is common in healthcare, so much so that:

> Dying, which was once viewed as natural and expected, has become medicalized into an unwelcome part of medical care. It has been distorted from a natural event of great social and cultural significance into the endpoint of untreatable or inadequately treated disease or injury.[2]

The point is not to side with a certain view of how events should be understood, but rather to emphasize that the ways events are framed, the metaphors in terms of which they are understood, shape subsequent decisions about care.

In addition to the use of medical language to describe events, another factor shaping the organization of the problem is that the immediate context for decisions in the intensive care unit is medical crisis. In Bhante’s case, the initial crisis period lasted from when he was found unconscious through the period of the surgery. The fact that decisions need to be made quickly and often with incomplete information tends to focus attention on the immediate medical context rather than on taking a broader and more holistic view of the person’s life. In addition, the environment of the intensive care unit also shapes how events are understood, particularly by family and friends. For example, limited visiting, complex medical terminology, and the complex array of staff in an intensive care unit—multiple physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, nutritionists, speech therapists, physical therapists, ethicists, chaplains, and so on—can all leave a family feeling overwhelmed, particularly if different members of the care team have different understandings of the situation. Finally, larger cultural events can lead families and friends to have unrealistic expectations of intensive care unit stays. Television shows such as *E.R.* portray rates of success that are significantly higher than the most optimistic survival rates in the medical literature.[3] In sum, communicative, contextual, and cultural factors all shape how events are framed, which in turn shapes understanding and affects subsequent care decisions.

A variety of values, more or less clearly articulated, are embedded within the practice of medicine. In the United States it is standard to identify such things as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, but also care and compassion, as central values in healthcare. Just as patients do not arrive at a hospital with their illness pre-identified but rather come with an ill-defined complaint—if they are able to communicate—so, too, the ethical concerns are not always immediately identifiable as such. Several kinds of

approaches to clinical ethics exist, ranging from application of some sort of ethical framework, exploration of salient cases, and self-conscious attempts to develop approaches based on medical models that are familiar to clinicians.[4] There has been extensive discussion of how Buddhist concepts can be introduced into bioethics.[5] Notably, Ratanakul has discussed a clinical bioethics model based largely on Buddhist themes such as veracity, compassion, and *kamma* to teach medical students in Thailand.[6]

A clinical approach to bioethics involves analyzing ethical issues in medical practice using a framework similar to that taught to clinicians throughout their training. Clinicians are taught to "present" a patient by stating the chief complaint, the history of the present illness, the past medical history, the physical findings, and the laboratory data. In this way, case reports serve to organize information. Ethics consultations also involve a similar kind of organization of information. Ethics consultations begin with a statement of the reason for the consultation, followed by a review of the medical circumstances of the case, patient preferences, issues surrounding quality of life, and various contextual features. The ethics consultant gathers appropriate data (by reading the chart, talking with healthcare professionals and the family), clarifies relevant concepts (confidentiality, informed consent, best interest), analyzes various normative issues (the implications of societal values, law, ethics, and institutional policy on a case), and helps to identify a range of morally acceptable options appropriate to the given situation.[7]

A medical case presentation abstracts from many details of the clinical situation, focusing on the issues relevant to arriving at a diagnosis and treatment plan. So, too, this ethical framework abstracts from a number of clinical details to highlight the ethical issues and appropriate recommendations. But if this reflects an ideal, the reality of hospital-based clinical ethics is more complicated, because ethical dimensions are frequently accompanied by social, cultural, and personal dimensions. I will discuss below how the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa included cultural and religious concerns.

Medical indications

A second issue in clinical ethics involves review of the medical circumstances of the case. At a clinical level, there was considerable uncertainty concerning the likelihood of a successful recovery in the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa. The prognosis tends to be worse for anoxic brain injury than for traumatic injury; other conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and diabetes also complicate things, though to a lesser extent. Communicating complex medical information to a diverse group of people proved difficult. Bhante's friends and students included American convert Buddhists, Burmese immigrants, and Lao and other Southeast Asian Buddhists. There are a small number of Burmese monks in the United States, and it is not unusual for Burmese monks to live with other Theravādin monks. Educational levels and language skill levels varied, as did expectations for working with physicians. The medical uncertainty complicated ethical decision-making, though the main problem was that Bhante's wishes about medical treatment were unknown. Currently, healthcare providers in the United States try to tailor treatment decisions to the needs and wishes of the patient. When these wishes are unknown or when there is disagreement among family, friends, or other surrogates, healthcare professionals are likely to adopt what is known in law as the "best interest" standard, which is a vague standard concerning what a reasonable person would want in a

similar situation. There is currently not a national consensus about what should be done in cases such as that of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa's.

Patient preferences

The third issue in a bioethics consultation concerns patient preferences. An initial ethical issue in Venerable U Sacca Vamsa's case involved trying to ascertain his wishes and identify appropriate people to make healthcare decisions. The need for a healthcare decision-maker continued, since he remained unconscious in the days and weeks after the surgery. Venerable U Sacca Vamsa had not created a living will, which specifies healthcare wishes, or a durable power of attorney for healthcare, which names a healthcare decision-maker. Non-decisional patients whose wishes are unknown are some of the more difficult ethical cases.

Several factors made it difficult to ascertain Venerable U Sacca Vamsa's wishes. The hospital needed help in contacting Bhante's family members. American students helped contact other monks, both in the US and in Myanmar, and through them helped the hospital contact family members in Myanmar. The fact that the only relative lived in a remote area of Myanmar and did not have a telephone complicated communication. The family member indicated via letter that decisions should be made by the *sangha,* and named a particular Sayadaw in Myanmar as the responsible party. The Sayadaw advised the American students to treat the monk as long as the doctors advised and as long as sufficient funds existed, but beyond that, indicated that it would be the *kamma* of the monk that would decide things.

The fact that it was difficult to locate his relatives, that his relatives believed the hospital should work with the *sangha,* and the hospital's lack of understanding of Buddhism were all reasons that made it difficult to ascertain Bhante's wishes. Another factor is that the hospital did not have an ethics consultancy service, but rather operated with an ethics committee. The committee, like many such committees, met only as needed. In the United States, hospitals are required to have some sort of ethics mechanism, but this can take the form of a committee or a consulting service. The hospital, after consulting its ethics committee, decided that a court-appointed guardian was required for decisions about healthcare. This decision shaped much of the rest of the case. It is possible that this decision is a result of not having an active consultancy service or a committee that met on a regular basis, as well as having a committee that was unfamiliar with Buddhism.

An additional factor that made it difficult to ascertain and act on his wishes was the healthcare providers' lack of understanding of Buddhism and the role of the *sangha* in caring for monks. As the United States becomes an increasingly multicultural and multi-religious society,[8] the need for cultural competence by healthcare providers becomes more pressing.[9] There has been integration of Buddhism or Buddhist themes into healthcare, for example in stress reduction,[10] counselling,[11] and particularly in the hospice movement.[12] Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in terms of insuring that healthcare providers respond with cultural competence. Macklin has wondered whether these demographic changes in American society will result in "multicultural value conflict" and concludes that it need not. Instead, Macklin argues that these issues can be seen within standard Western bioethics as questions about respect for persons. The fact

that a person from another culture may make decisions in a different way is exactly the sort of point that respect for persons and protection of autonomy is designed to safeguard.[13] Bioethicists provide guidance in decision-making by articulating patients' and families' and clinicians' values and beliefs. The problem may be less one of conflict of belief, and more one of a lack of understanding of the values of Buddhist monks or sufficient experience with these values to feel comfortable enough to accommodate them in practice. Rather than focusing on Bhante as a patient, the hospital saw him as someone from another culture, as someone with other views.

Another difference is in the social support network that each monk had. As Ratanakul notes in his review of the similar case of the famous Thai monk Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikku, because the monk was in Thailand he was accompanied to the hospital by monks who knew and cared for him. In contrast, because of the limited number of Burmese monks in the United States, the *sangha* was only able to provide limited and intermittent support. For example, monks came from Austin, Texas, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, to support Venerable U Sacca Vamsa. However, because of their obligations to their own *vihāras* each was able to stay only about a week. The Lao monks in the temple came to visit Bhante regularly, but they were limited in terms of transportation, for which they depended on lay people for help. Additionally, social support was limited because of the limited visiting allowed patients in intensive care units. The complex social network of the monk appeared to complicate determination of a surrogate as far as the hospital was concerned. Venerable U Sacca Vamsa was from Myanmar, and there were a number of friends and students from Myanmar living in the US. In addition there were ties to people in Myanmar. The monk lived at a Laotian temple, so there were also Lao people who looked after him. In addition there were the American students and friends of the monk.

An additional factor that complicated matters in determining a surrogate related to the important value placed on monks and teachers. Several of Bhante's students and friends expressed that everything should be done *because* he was a monk. Frequently families say that they want "everything done"; members of the care team have a role in helping families and friends understand what is possible given the circumstances, and often in helping them voice their concerns and prepare for bad news. However, a factor that complicated this process in the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa was the fact that his role as a monk, rather than a lay person, inclined many people to be particularly deferential to the recommendations of the doctors and not inquire about what Bhante would have wanted. Providing all possible therapy was viewed by several friends as an example of *dāna*, and was seen as particularly meritorious because the giving occurred at a particularly meaningful time in the life of the monk. In sum, the primary reasons why determining who should make healthcare decisions was difficult were that Venerable U Sacca Vamsa remained unconscious throughout and that his wishes were unknown.

In addition, several factors complicated determining who should make healthcare decisions. First, the relatives lived in another country in a remote area and did not have a phone. Second, the hospital did not have experience of dealing with Buddhist monks and was not comfortable with allowing other monks to be healthcare surrogates. Third, there were multiple groups, including different Asian immigrant groups as well as Western convert Buddhists, who visited the monk. Finally, providing healthcare to a monk was viewed by his friends and students as a particularly meritorious kind of *dāna*. For all of these reasons, the cultural and religious values seemed to occlude the ability of both lay

people and healthcare providers to evaluate the wishes of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa as a person and as a patient.

Quality of life

A fourth concern in clinical ethics concerns quality of life. This issue arises as a focus of particular ethical concern when patients are not decisional, as in the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa. As his clinical course continued without improvement, and after the American students had been appointed as guardians by the court, questions emerged as to whether being maintained indefinitely on artificial respiration and artificial hydration and nutrition was an appropriate quality of life. Ratanakul notes a similar issue arose in the case of Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikku. In both cases, concern arose about whether discontinuing care when the benefit was not outweighed by the burden was equivalent to euthanasia.

When family members and friends raise questions about “euthanasia” the issue may not indicate a moral concern, but rather point to emotional and social issues. Although questions about euthanasia can indicate a lack of understanding, or principled moral objections, such questions also may indicate difficulty in dealing with the impending death of a loved one. Families, friends, and even clinicians find these issues difficult, and often find ethical distinctions unsatisfactory, even though they recognize they are appropriate. The concern about quality of life may arise from discomfort from the environment in which death is managed in most hospitals in the United States. McCue articulated the problem:

> Modern medicine increasingly can control the tempo and form of dying and determine with precision the time and place of death, thus making it possible to continue or discontinue life-sustaining technology for ideal timing of organ transplantation, to allow family to be present for a loved one’s death, or to delay death for the convenience of court deliberations. Yet this technology has also made death a starkly unnatural event and has intensified debates over distinguishing disease-related death from death hastened by palliative treatment for a terminal illness or physician-assisted death.[14]

Dying now occurs most often in hospitals and long-term care facilities. The shift from dying at home to dying in institutions involves an almost inevitable medicalization of the dying process. Although there has been a cultural shift in terms of where people die, there has not been an attendant shift in the values guiding end-of-life care. One physician in my town, whose practice is considered exemplary in terms of end-of-life care, recently noted that he continues to feel uncomfortable when he must withdraw care from a patient because to continue it is futile or overly burdensome. Even when the family is in agreement, even if there are advance directives, even if he would not change his practice, he nevertheless indicated he feels a sense of unease that has not been addressed by the bioethics literature on end-of-life care. This may be because the physician is seeing death as part of a larger spiritual process, and feeling a disconnection between these values and the modern intensive care unit.

The historical development of the ethics of forgoing life-sustaining treatment traces a series of distinctions, such as between omission and commission, active and passive, and ordinary and extraordinary.[15] Increasingly this issue is viewed in terms of the principle of proportionality, which indicates that the ethical obligation to recommend or provide medical treatment depends on whether the estimated benefit of treatment is greater than the attendant burdens.[16] Regardless of the extent to which there has been progress in the bioethics literature on this topic, these issues are still difficult at a clinical level, particularly for clinicians who do not deal with dying patients on a daily basis. As Jonsen *et al.* note, "The most difficult application of proportionality is when surrogates apply this principle to reach decisions for irreversibly incapacitated individuals who have left no prior directive," as in the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa.[17]

The ethical dimensions of forgoing treatment and euthanasia have been discussed extensively.[18] Keown has argued that Buddhism rejects euthanasia. He notes that since Buddhism relies on intention *(cetanā)* in order to assess an action's moral worth, its focus is broadly consistent with Western legal and medical traditions. Keown maintains that it is "important to bear in mind the difference between passive euthanasia and the withholding or withdrawal of burdensome and futile treatment."[19] According to Keown, rejecting euthanasia does not in turn impose an obligation to preserve life at all costs.

> There is no obligation to resuscitate the dying or to resort to piecemeal treatments such as prescribing antibiotics for terminal patients. From a Buddhist perspective, there would be no objection to ceasing treatments which are futile or too burdensome in the light of the overall prognosis for recovery. Neither doctor nor patient is under any obligation to prolong life purely as an end in itself.[20]

Noting that "clinging to life would be thought detrimental to spiritual progress," Keown and others have suggested that Buddhism would support the ideals of the hospice movement.[21] One of the advantages of a hospice is that it provides a holistic approach to end-of-life care, addressing emotional, spiritual, and social needs in addition to medical issues. Many hospitals are creating in-hospital hospice beds for patients such as Venerable U Sacca Vamsa. The concerns about quality of life in the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa likely could have been addressed if the hospital had hospice beds and the ability to provide more holistic care that would address the stress created by the intensive care unit. This point is also mentioned by Ratanakul, who believes that hospice care would have resulted in a better outcome in terms of reduced suffering in the case of Venerable Buddhadasa.[22]

Contextual features

A final topic in assessing clinical ethics issues is to address contextual features. Jonsen *et al.* use this last category to mean the social, cultural, and legal context in which a case exists. Religion played an important role in this case. As noted, the lack of understanding of Buddhism by the hospital seemed to be involved in the decision to require a court-appointed conservator. This case is thus consistent with other reports of conflict between religion and healthcare.[23] Buddhist monks in the United States are likely to continue to

face a healthcare system which has only passing familiarity with Buddhism for the foreseeable future. Except in areas where there are large numbers of immigrant Buddhists and except for the occasional healthcare practitioner who is a Buddhist, most healthcare encounters are likely to be with people who lack an understanding of Buddhism and familiarity with monks. Scholarly discussions of religion and ethics have focused on trying to determine the authenticity of the religious beliefs and ways that religion can be accommodated in healthcare environments.[24] As these cases indicate, this is often difficult.

Another context of the case is the fact that Venerable U Sacca Vamsa was an immigrant. There is a general understanding that healthcare services are underutilized by South Asian immigrants. One result of underutilization of healthcare services in general and primary care in particular is that there are fewer opportunities to engage in preventive care in education and planning for end-of-life care. Further complicating matters in the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa is the fact that as a monk he was considered indigent, though he eventually was able to qualify for healthcare coverage under TennCare, the health insurance program for the state of Tennessee. In the next section, I suggest ways that advance directives might help to address several of the concerns noted in the cases.

Advance directives

Buddhist monks in the United States should have advance directives for healthcare. Advance directives are embodied in the Patient Self-Determination Act, which requires medical institutions to give patients information about advance directives such as living wills and healthcare powers of attorney. A power of attorney for healthcare or healthcare proxy allows a person to specify who should make decisions in the event of incapacity. This person, known as a healthcare surrogate, is able to make healthcare decisions on behalf of the incapacitated person. Sometimes the documents are called “durable power of attorney” because they also include the ability for the surrogate to make decisions about organ donation and disposal of remains. Living wills specify a person’s wishes about future healthcare needs, for example concerning artificial food and fluid, mechanical ventilation, and so on. Statutes vary depending on the state, but most have established both living wills and durable powers of attorney for healthcare or healthcare proxies.

Although advance directives are important in general, they are particularly important for people who do not fit the expectations of the American legal system. Non-married couples, gay and lesbian couples, and people who want someone other than an immediate family member to make healthcare decisions are examples of groups of people who are in particular need of advance directives. Although in many states family members can function as healthcare surrogates even in the absence of an advance directive, Buddhist monks in the United States often do not have family nearby who can fulfill this role. Thus, since Buddhist monks may not have family members present in the United States, and since they may want other monks in the *sangha* or unrelated lay people to make healthcare decisions, it is important that monks specify who should make decisions with a healthcare power of attorney. There are additional reasons why monks are in particular need of advance directives. To the extent that healthcare providers may not be familiar

with Buddhism, questions may be raised about what monks would want, and who should make decisions. Since many monks are immigrants who may lack full citizenship rights, healthcare providers may be reluctant to work with surrogates who are not "official," legally recognized surrogates. Since monks may not be known to a physician and may not go for regular checkups, they may not have a contact in the healthcare system who can help them navigate in the event of a problem. Another reason is that by naming a healthcare surrogate a monk would enable others to help physicians care for him in the event of his being incapacitated.

Buddhist monks should have powers of attorney, because they have several advantages over living wills. In their recent review, Fagerlin and Schneider argue that powers of attorney offer so many advantages over living wills that it is time to abandon living wills.[25] Even if this stronger claim cannot be sustained, monks should *at least* have a healthcare power of attorney, if not also a living will. Fagerlin and Schneider articulate a number of reasons why powers of attorney are superior to living wills. Powers of attorney are relatively simple to create in comparison with a living will. Living wills require specification of wishes concerning future treatment, and thus require education, deliberation, and considerable imagination about what might befall a person and what would be wanted under various possible future conditions. Powers of attorney are largely consistent with current practice, in which family members make decisions for healthcare. By naming a healthcare surrogate, a monk would enable this person to help physicians care for him. Since the practice of medicine in the United States turns on the notion of informed consent, and presumes that someone will represent a monk who is a patient in the event of his being incapacitated, a healthcare power of attorney would address the expectations of the medical system. Third, since surrogates know more about the medical issues at the time of an accident than it is possible to know in advance, and are able to work with the physicians at the time, it is possible that a power of attorney will yield better care than a living will which specifies wishes in advance. Fourth, powers of attorney are simple to fill out and relatively inexpensive to arrange, and do not require as much advice as a living will. Finally, powers of attorney fit within other laws specifying who should act in the event that no decision-maker is named. For these reasons, Fagerlin and Schneider conclude that powers of attorney have the advantage of being "simple, direct, modest, straightforward, and thrifty" and recommend their use over that of living wills.[26]

The benefit of healthcare powers of attorney is that monks would be able to care for each other and avoid the difficulties seen in the cases above. Since powers of attorney and living wills are relatively new devices in Asian countries, there is little institutional history to guide practice in the United States. Developing a workable process to help monks complete healthcare powers of attorney should be viewed in the context of the ongoing development of Buddhism in America. One way this process might be started is via primary care physicians, some of whom routinely address this topic with their patients. Physicians should be encouraged to complete a values history, which is an in-depth survey of values, especially for patients such as monks who do not "fit" within the expectations of the American healthcare system.[27] More likely, the process will involve educated lay people talking with monks. There are a number of unanswered questions, however. Would a monk who acts as a healthcare surrogate for an incapacitated monk bear negative *kamma* due to this action? This is a topic that requires further exploration.

However, it may help to note that when healthcare providers ask a surrogate what the patient would want in a given situation, they try to assess the ability of the surrogate to articulate what the patient would want. Focusing instead on encouraging monks to name other monks as healthcare surrogates may avoid these concerns. As the cases suggest, initiating these discussions with monks is important, and if done properly can minimize suffering. Such discussions are part of the maturation of Buddhism in America.

The hospital in the United States and state law did not recognize a legal role for the *sangha* in caring for Venerable U Sacca Vamsa. Subsequently, Tennessee amended its surrogacy regulations to allow "adults who have demonstrated special care and concern" to be recognized as surrogates. While this offers some help, it is important to note that at the time of the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa the hospital had substantial discretion in recognizing surrogates, but nevertheless required a court-appointed conservator due to poor understanding of Buddhism. For the reasons noted above, including the unfamiliarity with Buddhism, it is important for members of the *sangha* to create powers of attorney that designate healthcare surrogates in order to make sure they are able to care for their monks as they see fit.

Conclusion

Religion in general is an important issue in bioethics because it deals with values regarding life, death, health, illness, and the body and mind. Buddhism is no exception. However, limiting bioethics to values and beliefs overlooks the most important element of bioethics concerning how patients and family members' daily life conditions influence their decisions about medical treatment. This review of the case of Venerable U Sacca Vamsa focused on ethical difficulties raised by the uncertainty about his wishes, and by a lack of understanding of Buddhism by healthcare providers. The case identifies the importance of advance directives, particularly the importance of durable powers of attorney.

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3
BUDDHISM: MORALITY WITHOUT ETHICS?

Damien Keown

The aim of this chapter is to explore some of the innovations, adaptations, and problems which have arisen in connection with the development of a new academic discipline. The discipline I will be discussing is Buddhist ethics, and I will be suggesting that the appearance of this field of study is an innovation which has arisen as Buddhism encounters the West, an area about which Charles S.Prebish has written copiously and the study of which he has played an active part in promoting. I wish to problematize the encounter between Buddhism and the West by pointing out the apparent absence of a discipline of ethics in Buddhism as a religious tradition, in contrast to the high profile enjoyed by ethics in the West. Incidentally, by "Buddhism" here I have in mind no specific school or historical period, and my comments are made with respect to an amorphous fiction which for convenience might be termed "mainstream Buddhism." The salient characteristic of this fiction for our present purposes is that it embodies the core elements of belief and practice jointly subscribed to by both non-Māhāyāna and Mahāyāna schools.

The chapter has two parts. The first is devoted to explaining what I mean when I suggest that Buddhism has no ethics. The second part offers some tentative suggestions as to why this is the case. These suggestions are speculative, and I am only too aware that the subject needs a much more rigorous examination than the one it receives here. I am simply airing a question which is intriguing and I lay no claim to having resolved it. From time to time I will make some autobiographical comments, since my thoughts on this question arise out of my own personal experience of studying Buddhist ethics over the past twenty-five years.

The absence of ethics in Buddhism

As the title of my chapter may sound a little provocative, let me begin by explaining what I mean by it. To start with I will adopt the *via negativa,* and try to make clear what it is I am *not* suggesting. First, I am not saying, as is sometimes claimed, that there can be no such thing as Buddhist ethics for reasons associated with Buddhist metaphysics. Sometimes it is said, for example, that certain special features of Buddhist metaphysics effectively undermine the possibility of ethics. Two teachings in particular are associated with this claim: the doctrines of no-self *(anattā)* and emptiness *(śūnyatā)*. Thus it is sometimes said, with reference to the doctrine of no-self, that the absence of an ultimate self entails the absence of moral agency, which undermines any basis for ethics. In other

words, how can there be morality without a moral agent? And with respect to emptiness it is often claimed that since all phenomena are empty of self-essence, in the last analysis good and evil are not found, so there can be no such thing as moral value. These notions link up with the pervasive but now thankfully less common notion that Buddhas and *Arhats* somehow transcend moral values and that in the last analysis the enlightened sage passes "beyond good and evil." I will not discuss the merits of these claims here, and mention them only to make clear that my suggestion that Buddhism has no ethics has nothing to do with the internal problem of reconciling one Buddhist doctrine with another. In fact, my argument has little to do with philosophical questions in Buddhism at all.

The second thing I am not saying is that Buddhism is unethical, amoral, non-moral, that Buddhism itself lacks moral teachings or that its followers do not put them into practice. In fact the situation is quite the reverse. Buddhism is widely respected as one of the world's most ethical religions, and I have no wish to disagree with that assessment. There is a well-known book by the late Venerable Saddhatissa entitled *Buddhist Ethics* which is still in print some thirty-three years after he published it in 1970. The full title of the work is *Buddhist Ethics*. *Essence of Buddhism* (London: Allen and Unwin), and the subtitle clearly indicates that the learned author regarded ethics as a central part of Buddhist teachings. On this point I am in full agreement.

If I am not seeking to claim either of the two things just mentioned, what lies behind the title of my chapter? Perhaps I can best explain this by introducing a distinction that is sometimes made in textbooks on ethics between "ethics" and "morality." Sometimes the question is raised as to why we have two words in English—often used interchangeably—for what appears to be the same thing. The simple answer to this question is that one word derives from Greek and the other from Latin. The Greek ancestor of the English word ethics is *ethikos* or *ethos*, denoting customary behavior or character, and the English word "morality" derives from Latin words like *mores* and *moralis*. The sense here is of the norms, standards, or patterns of behavior which are customary or appropriate in a society.

Sometimes, however, a more complicated answer is given which seeks to give a special nuance to each term. In this respect it is suggested that "morality" is used to denote the standards or values of a society as they are in reality, while ethics comes to mean the philosophical analysis of those values. Thus while morality relates to the actual behavior of the man in the street, ethics is something done by philosophers who typically work in universities' departments of ethics. The same distinction could be made more simply by using the terms "morality" and "moral philosophy," the latter being a now somewhat dated term for ethics. Ethics thus comes to have the sense of the detached evaluation and critical analysis of human conduct. One could say that morality forms the subject matter or raw data of the ethicist's deliberations. In other words, it is a bit like the way in which an anthropologist goes to a remote place to study a tribal culture. He fills his notebooks with observations of the local customs and practices, and then returns to write up his results in the form of theoretical reflections on the nature of the society he has studied. In this analogy the data collected relating to customs and practices correspond to "morality," and the critical reflection on the data to "ethics."

Whatever its merits, this distinction is useful because it allows me to say that while Buddhism has a good deal to say about morality, it has little or nothing to say about

ethics. I began to notice this problem in a dim way when I first began studying Buddhist ethics. At that time I found myself, to use a Buddhist image, in something of a cosmic void. Happily the situation is now much better, and there is a fair amount of material in print, much of it I am pleased to say emanating from the UK. Peggy Morgan and Clive Lawton included a useful survey of Buddhist ethics in their book *Ethical Issues in Six Religious Traditions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), and more recently the first textbook on the subject has appeared: I refer to Peter Harvey's excellent work *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics,* published in 2000 by Cambridge University Press.

When searching for material on Buddhist ethics as a research student, I often felt I had made some kind of category mistake, or that there was a mismatch between Western philosophy and Buddhist thought. I had somewhat naively assumed that there would be treatises on ethics by Buddhist authors, just as there were by Western ones, but I soon realized this was not the case. I slowly began to become aware of this in a manner somewhat akin to that of the little boy in the fairy-tale of the emperor's new clothes. I began to realize that just as the emperor was wearing no clothes, Buddhism has no ethics. What Buddhism does have, and in great abundance, is morality. Its texts are full of teachings and injunctions that collectively constitute a way of life that is moral to the core. If Buddhism is anything it is a practical plan for life, a path that leads onwards and upwards towards the fulfillment of human potential in the perfect moral life lived by one who attains nirvana. Where Buddhism differs from the Western canon of thought is simply in not having developed a branch of philosophical inquiry devoted to the study and analysis of the moral norms it teaches.

Let me illustrate the point by reference to the Pāli Canon. I do not think that any of the three *piṭakas* contains material relating to ethics in the sense I have defined it. The *Sutta* *Sutta Piṭaka*, of course, contains abundant material on the subject of moral conduct. The Buddha teaches that *śīla* is a part of the Eightfold Path, sets out codes of conduct such as the Five Precepts, upholds the doctrine of karma, encourages people to practice virtues such as generosity, and gives some limited guidance to the laity in discourses such as the *Sigālovāda Sutta*. All of this falls squarely into the category of morality, as I have defined it above. On very few occasions—if any—does the Buddha move to a discussion of theoretical matters. Possibly the *Kālāma Sutta* is the closest he comes to this. Moreover, the Buddha rarely, if ever, explores ethical conundrums, such as whether it is ever right to tell a lie, and, if not, how one should respond to the mad axman who knocks on the door asking the whereabouts of his victim. In fact the Buddha gets off quite lightly: he rarely had to deal with probing questions of the kind Nāgasena had to face in his discussions with King Milinda, or the kind put to Jesus by rabbis concerning whether it was right to pay taxes to the Romans, and such like. One cannot but help contrast the quizzical, adversarial style of the *Milindapañha* with the total avoidance of controversy in the Buddha's discourses, and wonder how much the former owes to Greek influence in North West India (this despite the fact that the majority of the text was composed in Sri Lanka).

Tricky questions do sometimes arise in the *Vinaya* and are discussed in *Vinaya* commentaries. Here, the circumstances of the case are briefly presented and then a decision is recorded as to whether on the facts of the case a rule has been infringed. A notable case comes to mind under the third *pārājika* where a monk throws himself off a high place and lands on top of a basket-maker who is killed as a result (*Vinaya* iii.81).

The question raised by this rather unlikely scenario is whether this act constitutes a breach of the precept against taking human life. Considerable Jesuitical skills were exercised in resolving such borderline cases. This kind of casuistry, however, is limited to the specific needs of the monastic community and its disciplinary rules. In the West such matters would come under the rubric of law or jurisprudence, rather than ethics. I think, however, that these *Vinaya* discussions are probably the closest Buddhism comes to actually doing ethics.

Certain *Abhidharma* (Pāli: *Abhidhamma*) texts have a bearing on ethical matters, but do not directly pursue ethical themes. The first book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, the *Dhammasaṅganī*, contains lists of moral and immoral states of consciousness, but its aim is psychological classification rather than ethical analysis. The *Kathāvatthu* discusses heretical views but for the most part these relate to disputed points of doctrine rather than ethics. Later treatises follow the same kind of scholastic exegesis adopted throughout the *Abhidharma*. For example, Buddhaghosa's discussion of *śila* in the first part of the *Visuddhimagga* simply lists the various forms and classifications of *śīla* without ever attempting to explore or question the basic ethical presuppositions of the teachings. Much the same could be said of the *Abhidharmakośa* and other such scholastic compendia.

By comparison, if we look at Western literature of roughly the same period as the Pāli Canon, we find authors like Plato and Aristotle composing major treatises on ethics and politics. Plato's masterpiece, the *Republic*, is an extended treatment of three interwoven themes: politics, justice, and ethics. By contrast these themes—particularly the last two—receive very little attention in Buddhist literature. I have never come across a discussion of the concept of justice in Buddhist literature. Aristotle's legacy, likewise, contains treatises of monumental importance on similar subjects, such as the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*. So far as I am aware there is no treatise by any Buddhist author of any school or period which even remotely compares to these works in terms of scope and influence. The learned doctors of Buddhism, it seems, were simply occupied with other subjects, such as *Abhidharma*.

The so-called "Socratic paradoxes" in Plato's early dialogues provide several examples of the kind of problem I would designate as "ethical." In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates asks whether certain things are good because God commands them, or whether God commands them because they're good. A Buddhist version of this problem might ask whether certain acts are bad because they are punished by karma, or whether they are punished by karma because they are bad. Although this is clearly an important question, I have never seen the problem posed in these terms by Buddhist authors. Other paradoxes concern whether wrongdoing is purely the result of ignorance, and whether all of the virtues are ultimately one. Perhaps the most poignant of the dilemmas faced is that in the *Crito* when Socrates himself considers whether he should attempt to escape from his confinement while awaiting execution. He gives a threefold argument why he should not break the law by escaping: first, we should never harm anyone, and escaping would harm the state by violating its laws; second, by living in a state one tacitly agrees to its laws, and to violate the law is to break an agreement, which is wrong; and third, since the state is like a parent and teacher there is a duty to obey it just as there is to obey parents and teachers. Each of these arguments appeals to a general rule or principle, namely (i) it is always wrong to harm anyone; (ii) we should always keep our promises; (iii) we ought to obey and respect parents and teachers. Based on this, Socrates draws a conclusion about

what he should do in his particular situation. This illustrates how ethical reasoning proceeds by applying general principles to specific situations.

As the subject of ethics evolved, it came to have three branches: (i) metaethics; (ii) normative ethics; and (iii) applied ethics. The kinds of questions just mentioned fall mainly into the first category, the branch of ethics known as metaethics. This sees its task as the conceptual one of analyzing the meaning of moral terms and judgments and characterizing the logical relations in moral arguments. Normative ethics proposes ways in which we ought to act, or define the kind of lives we ought to lead, and applied ethics is concerned with the application of ethical principles to particular problem cases, such as issues in medical ethics like abortion and euthanasia, problems in sexual ethics like same-sex relationships, issues in ecology and the treatment of animals, and a range of other matters such as war, the use of violence, and capital punishment. While Buddhist teachings include normative aspects, such as the Five Precepts and the rules of the *Vinaya*, these are typically presented simply as injunctions, rather than as conclusions logically deduced from explicitly stated values and principles. In other words, the Precepts are simply announced, and one is left to figure out the invisible superstructure from which they are derived. Thus although Buddhism has normative teachings, it does not have normative ethics. It has virtually nothing to say about metaethics and is only slowly beginning to address issues in applied ethics. I therefore turn now to the second part of my chapter in which I will suggest some reasons for this hiatus.

Reasons for the absence of ethics

In this second part of the chapter I will simply offer six reasons which have occurred to me from time to time as to why Buddhism has very little extant literature on ethics. The first explanation for this curious lacuna in Buddhist intellectual life is the suggestion that it is not a genuine gap, merely a temporary one waiting to be filled by the discovery of the relevant manuscripts that have so far been lost to history. This suggestion derives its plausibility from the voluminous nature of Buddhist texts in various languages and the fact that only a small percentage has as yet been translated. Perhaps, then, extended discussions of virtue and justice do exist and are simply awaiting discovery. This hypothesis is an attractive one, but is unlikely to be correct since manuscripts on all manner of other topics have come to light and it would be curious if only treatises on ethics had selectively been lost. I think it is more likely that the material was never composed in the first place, rather than composed and then lost. However, I must be cautious here and allow for my own considerable ignorance with respect to the history of Buddhism in different cultures. Perhaps historians of the various traditions will be able to point to such treatises, and if so the problem will be solved. I would expect at least to find some treatises on politics or advice to kings, given the close connection between Buddhism and the secular authorities in countries such as Sri Lanka and Thailand. My suspicion, however, is that few texts on ethics will be found.

A second explanation, not unrelated to the first, might also seek to play down the scale of the differences. It might be suggested that knowledge is distributed in different ways in different cultures, and that while we may not find ethics represented as an independent discipline, ethical concerns will nevertheless be addressed elsewhere in different

categories or under different rubrics. We simply have to look for them. There is some truth in this, and I have already alluded to the similarities between Western ethics and the jurisprudential concerns of Buddhist monastic texts. But this similarity cannot be pressed too far, and look as one might there is little evidence of theoretical discussion of ethics in the extant Buddhist literature. It is difficult even to think what indigenous terms would denote this particular branch of learning. Again, there are many categories of knowledge that are common to East and West—such as epistemology, logic, metaphysics, psychology, grammar, and medicine—so the suggestion of a different packaging or distribution of knowledge is limited at best.

A third suggestion is that in the context of a system of religious (as opposed to secular) ethics, the need is for implementation rather than critique. The truth has been revealed by the Buddha, so now there is no longer any need to spend time in speculation. Furthermore, would it not be a kind of disrespect or lack of faith in the enlightened teacher to question the moral guidelines he had laid down? Given the Buddhist emphasis on pragmatism, moreover, and since human life is short and the path is clear, our energy is most profitably spent in proceeding along it as quickly as possible rather than questioning it. The Buddha’s focus was ever on the practical and empirical, and particularly on the problem of human suffering and its resolution. In the famous simile of the man wounded by an arrow (M.i.429) he makes the point that the urgent need is to remove the arrow and heal the wound rather than pursue a speculative inquiry into matters such as where the arrow came from, how far away the archer was standing, the trajectory of the shot, and such like. The Eightfold Path has been taught; what matters now is to follow it.

However, do not all religions revere their founders, and teach that life is short and that people must exert themselves if they are to reach salvation? In Christianity, the fact that moral teachings have been revealed by a divine teacher has never been a bar to the development of a critical discipline of Christian ethics. Ethics has always been a central part of the Christian curriculum, and Church Fathers and medieval scholars were deeply interested in these matters. There have been university chairs in Christian ethics almost as long as there have been universities, but curiously there has never been a single chair in Buddhist ethics in any university either in the East or the West down to the present day.

Furthermore, the argument concerning the essentially practical nature of Buddhist thought should not be pressed too far. Buddhism is an intellectually dynamic tradition, and from the earliest times there has been philosophical speculation on all kinds of matters, many of which have little direct connection with the practice of the Eightfold Path. Buddhist authors frequently proposed new and often revolutionary interpretations of the Buddha’s teachings, so it is hard to imagine they would have abstained from commenting in this area alone.

A fourth point concerns the origins of Buddhism and the fact that it began as a renouncer tradition so that questions about the regulation of social life were never part of its agenda. The Buddha’s early followers abandoned the cramped and dusty life of the householder for the freedom to live outside the restrictive norms of ordinary society. In particular, Buddhism rejected the caste system and the tradition of religious law taught in the *Dharmaśāstras*. Perhaps distaste for the complexity and rigidity of this system of social organization steered Buddhism away from issues concerning the rights and duties of individuals in society. Buddhism never sought to compete with Hinduism in this area,

and perhaps was content simply to leave the field to its rival. When rules became necessary for the conduct of monastic life it evolved its own regulations in the *Vinaya*. Monks are also often reminded to keep their eye on the ball, so to speak, and not allow themselves to be distracted from their religious practice. The *Milindapañha,* for example, speaks of the training and duties of princes in some twelve specialist areas, and also of the business of merchants and workers. Monks, by contrast, are reminded that their focus should be on practices such as the four foundations of mindfulness and combating the defilements.

I find this line of explanation only partially persuasive, since Buddhism was never a movement of pure renouncers, and soon became integrated into social life. Given the requirement to beg for food daily in the local village, it is hard to see how social contact could be avoided, except during retreats. Throughout South Asia the monastery and the village function interdependently, with the laity providing material support in return for religious teachings from monks. In some cultures, the monastery even came to dominate social life, as in Tibet, and in other regions Buddhism spread to there was much opportunity for monks to comment on or seek to modify existing social institutions as Buddhism became integrated into the local society. The picture of Buddhism as aloof from social issues and the challenges of moral dilemmas, therefore, is not really convincing. Nor is the suggestion that monks should do nothing all day but meditate on the four foundations of mindfulness one that was ever rigorously put into practice.

A fifth reason, and one that I find a more compelling explanation for the absence of books on ethics in Buddhism, is that the subject was never recognized as an independent branch of learning and never formed part of the traditional monastic curriculum. Let me elaborate with a little autobiographical detail. As a postgraduate in Oxford my researches often took me to the Bodleian Library, to the old part which is reached by passing through the courtyard known as the Schools Quad. Those familiar with this distinguished building will recall that over the various entrances are written in Latin the names of the different branches of learning studied in the lecture rooms within. The dozen or so subjects mentioned, in no particular order, are: grammar and history, metaphysics, moral philosophy, logic, music, natural philosophy, law, languages (Hebrew and Greek), arithmetic and geometry, astronomy, rhetoric, anatomy and medicine. Construction of the Schools Quad was completed in 1624, so we may regard this list as summarizing in a rough and ready way the major branches of Western learning at the end of the Middle Ages. I wish here to simply note the inclusion of ethics or “moral philosophy” as one of the subjects in the curriculum.

Buddhism, too, values learning, and a multidisciplinary and comprehensive education has always been prized. The *Jātaka* stories speak of the bodhisatta (Sanskrit: bodhisattva) mastering all branches of learning, including medicine, in the famous university of Taxila. The *Lalitavistara* praises Gautama for his proficiency in eighty-six disciplines of the humanities and sciences. With this in mind, let us now transport ourselves from Oxford to India and go back in time to visit one of the great monastic universities like Nālandā, Somapuri, Valabhī, or the Mahā-vihāra and Abhayagiri monasteries in Sri Lanka. What subjects would have been written over the entrances to the classrooms at Nālandā where the 10,000 students and 1500 tutors assembled for their 100 lectures per day? I think it likely that the core syllabus would have featured the *pañca-vidyā* or “five sciences,” namely grammar *(śabda),* logic *(hetu),* Buddhist philosophy consisting of

subjects such as Abhidharma, Prajñāpāramitā, and Madhyamika *(adhyātma-cikitsā)*, Vinaya, and secular arts and crafts such as medicine *(śilpakarmasthāna-vidyā)*. These five subjects came to form the basis of the standard curriculum in Mahāyāna āna institutions, including the great monastic colleges of Tibet. I am not sure what subjects were studied in Sri Lanka, but most likely the curriculum would have been based on the *Tipiṭaka* and study of the commentaries, supplemented by ancillary subjects like grammar. I doubt very much, however, whether the lecture halls of any of these institutions would have resounded to discussions of ethics since the subject does not appear to feature in the curriculum.

The sixth and final suggestion I will make involves turning the telescope the other way round. In other words, maybe it is not *Buddhism* that is unusual, but *Western thought* that is distinctive and perhaps unique in some way in having developed ethics as a separate branch of philosophy. One could draw an analogy here with sport: just as Americans play baseball and the English play cricket, so different cultures have different strengths and preferences for different subjects. In other words, it may be that ethics is just a Western preoccupation in the way that baseball is primarily an American sport. It can be noted, for instance, that Buddhism invested a great deal of attention in psychology, and developed a far more sophisticated classification of mental phenomena than anything found in the West.

This difference in preferences could be linked to historical and political factors. As everyone knows, the Greeks invented democracy, an institution which they often contrasted with the despotism of their Eastern neighbors. While often admiring the magnificent cultures of Egypt and Persia, they disdained the way they were ruled. Reacting against this they invented the science of politics and gave birth to a new way of relating to their fellow citizens. Citizens varied in wealth, beauty, and intelligence, but as citizens they were equal. This was because citizens were rational, and the appropriate relation between rational beings is that of persuasion using the kinds of arguments and language one finds in ethical and political discourse. I have already referred to Socrates, whose identity was so bound up with that of his *polis* that he was prepared to give up his own life rather than break its laws. Greek political science sought to develop constitutions through studying human nature and human relationships. Aristotle concerned himself with both politics and ethics, seeking answers to questions such as whether it was possible to be both a good citizen and a good man. The link between ethics and politics goes very deep, and has left its mark on Western civilization in a way which it may not have in the East.

Buddhism, by contrast, developed under a system which the Greeks would have regarded as despotism. To them, kings like Bimbisāra and Ajātasattu were tyrants, and so too was their ultimate heir the great Asoka, despite his tolerant policy of rule by *Dhamma*. To put the matter simply, while one may debate with a fellow citizen, only a fool would do so with an emperor. The sciences of politics and ethics, accordingly, are redundant where kings or tyrants rule: what one finds in their place is statecraft. Since throughout its long history Buddhism has lived predominantly under non-democratic political systems, perhaps it is not surprising that it has never developed the disciplines of ethics and politics. It is true that the Buddhist *sangha* functions in many ways as a democratic institution, but unlike a democratic society its rules are not determined by its

members. The rules of the *sangha* are already established, and once admitted there is no debate about which rules to keep and which to ignore.

Whatever the merits of these tentative suggestions, it seems clear that it is only since Buddhism arrived in the West that a nascent discipline of Buddhist ethics has been established, and we have seen the appearance of the related phenomenon known as "Engaged Buddhism," concerned with issues such as social justice, politics, and the environment. Engaged Buddhism may be thought of as dealing with the larger issues of public policy, while ethics is concerned with the specifics of individual conduct. Clearly there is a connection between them, and it can be no coincidence that both these disciplines have arisen at roughly the same time and in the same way as Buddhism encounters the West. I tend to see Engaged Buddhism and Buddhist ethics as corresponding to two of the major branches of Western learning—ethics and politics—which for one reason or another were never developed in Buddhism to anything like the same degree as we find in the West.

The above suggestions are neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, but merely a list of speculations which have occurred to me as I ponder the question of why Buddhism has no ethics. Perhaps there is a simple answer that I have overlooked, or conversely, the explanation involves complex historical and cultural questions which only specialists in the various traditions are qualified to answer. Let me emphasize that my intention is not to berate Buddhism for this apparent lack of an ethics, or to trumpet the superiority of the West. It is simply to express my own perplexity in the face of an apparent anomaly in the way different cultures map knowledge. My conclusion for now is that although it is hard to be sure about the causes in the past which have shaped the contours of Buddhist learning, as we look to the future innovation and adaptation will be required if Buddhism is to become a partner in a global ethical dialogue.

Judith Simmer-Brown

4
THE PROSPECTS FOR A *BHIKṢUNĪ SANGHA* IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM

In the "feminization" of Buddhism in its American setting, one of the important developments is the growth in the number of Buddhist nuns who have sought the traditional full ordination of the *bhikṣunī*. To date, the ordination of *bhikṣunīs* has been an individual matter, sought by novices on a case-by-case basis. This chapter will survey the prospects for an actual order of fully ordained nuns, especially for women practicing in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Special attention will be paid to a systematic treatment of the concerns arising from the original design of the order, the authenticity of the vows and ordination according to the integrity of their transmission, and concerns arising uniquely in contemporary Tibetan Buddhism in exile. What steps may be necessary to establish a complete *bhikṣunī* order within Tibetan Buddhism?

On his second visit to the United States in 1977, H.H.Gyalwa Karmapa XVI, head of the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, spoke privately to an American Buddhist nun he had ordained as a novice three years earlier. Seeing that she was closely observing her novice (*śrāmaṇerī, getsulma*) vows, he suggested that she should receive the full *bhikṣunī* (gelongma) ordination.[1] Ani Pema Chodron was interested but puzzled, for she knew that full ordination for nuns had disappeared ten centuries ago in Tibet. How was she to receive the ordination?

Upon further inquiry, Ani-la discovered that His Holiness had been considering for some time how the *bhikṣunī* ordination could be established in Tibet. One of his early western students, Freda Houlston Bedi (1911–1977), had been a compassionate patron of Tibetan refugees in India. Ms. Bedi was educated at Oxford, married a Sikh leader from the Punjab, and later directed the Young Lama's Home School in Darjeeling training the young *tulku* refugees in English and Western subjects.[2] After the school closed, with her family's blessings she received the novice ordination from His Holiness Karmapa in 1966. He encouraged her to receive the full *bhikṣunī* ordination, and in 1972 she was ordained by Rev. Ming-Tsi at a small temple in Hong Kong. Thereafter she was known as Gelongma Khechog Palmo, or Sister Palmo.[3] Later His Holiness asked Rev. Ming-Tsi in New York City to transmit to him the Chinese *bhikṣunī* ordination, so that he could pass it on to his students. His request was never fulfilled, for he and Rev. Ming-Tsi were unable to agree on the bodhisattva vow component to the ordination ceremony, which requires a vow of vegetarianism, a vow that is contrary to the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism.

Upon his return to the United States in 1980, His Holiness gave Ani Pema Chodron Rev. Ming-Tsi's name, and asked her to seek the ordination herself. Ani Pema wrote Rev. Ming-Tsi and discovered that the ordination was available once a year in Hong Kong and

Taiwan. In late June 1981, she went to Miu Fat Monastery in Hong Kong and received the full *bbikṣunī* ordination, after a week of classes in protocol, *vinaya*, and preparation for the ceremony. The temple kindly provided a translator for Ani Pema, and ushered her through the whole process that included a line of cone incense burns on top of her shaved head, indicating her willingness as a bodhisattva to suffer for other sentient beings. Nonetheless, she was a curiosity as the only Western nun in the ceremony. Ani Pema remembered, "I was something of a celebrity there; I found out afterwards, though I had no idea at the time, that I had appeared on television and in all the newspapers, and that they were fascinated that someone had come all that way to receive that ordination."[4]

Pema Chodron has since become one of the best-known dharma teachers in America, author of numerous books and empowered as an *ācārya*, or senior teacher, in the line of the Tibetan lama, Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. In 1984, she founded Gampo Abbey, a monastery for monks and nuns on Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. A few years after her ordination in Hong Kong, other Western nuns from the Tibetan tradition were also ordained in the Chinese tradition. Two other *bbikṣunīs* who have become prominent teachers and authors are Karma Lekshe Tsomo, who was ordained at Hae Ming Temple in Taipei in 1982, and Thubten Chodron, who was ordained in 1986. Ven. Chodron has recently founded Sravasti Abbey in Idaho. Since 1981, fifty Western novice nuns from the Tibetan tradition have received the full *bbikṣunī* ordination from either the Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese monastic *sanghas*, and they now seek to establish a Tibetan *bbikṣunī* order. In addition, a handful of exiled Tibetan nuns from India have received the *bbikṣunī* ordination from the Chinese tradition.

The Western *bbikṣunīs* of the Tibetan tradition, however, who receive the ordination from lineages other than their Tibetan one, face certain obstacles in the continuity of their practice. As solitary nuns with novice ordination in the Tibetan tradition and full ordination in a Chinese tradition, they find it difficult to obtain the support needed to create a strong monastic lineage. Perhaps these obstacles could be lessened by the establishment of a fully Tibetan monastic order. The primary obstacles that these new *bbikṣunīs* face are the lack of patronage, community, training, and education. In Asia, when monastics receive ordination from their Tibetan lama preceptors, there is a network of support provided by the monastery. These monasteries, whether in Tibet or in exile, may not be wealthy or prosperous, but they offer a dwelling and the basic daily needs for their residents. Thubten Chodron wrote, "Our Tibetan teachers do not provide for us financially, and, in many cases, ask us to raise money to support their Tibetan monk disciples who are refugees in India."[5] *Bbikṣunīs* have committed their lives to study and practice of the *dharma*, but without a monastic base the education they have so earnestly sought is denied them. Karma Lekshe Tsomo has written extensively on this topic,[6] and most recently has commented:

> It is not uncommon for a Western woman to become ordained as a nun only to discover that the master who ordained her has flown off to his next destination. The fresh novice is left with nothing to eat, nowhere to stay, no training, no arrangements for further education, and sometimes without any knowledge of the precepts she has pledged to uphold for life or how

> to wear the robes properly. After the first flush of excitement about ordination subsides, she begins to realize her aloneness and lack of a supportive community.[7]

While there are Tibetan nunneries for novice nuns in India, they are generally overcrowded, under-resourced, and lacking an educational program. Sometimes Western nuns may stay only if they are paying guests. Tenzin Kacho, a Western *bhikṣunī* who is a Buddhist chaplain at the U.S. Airforce Academy, commented:

> For Western nuns who have taken higher ordination, we must fend for ourselves in Asia as well. We don't fit in with the regular community for this additional reason. I tend to put my higher ordination status aside to fit in as I can, and not to stick out or appear proud. I sit in my novice ordination or entrance to the nunnery order and before, there was little discussion with Tibetans about higher ordination. Perhaps there is more discussion now.[8]

In sum, *bhikṣunīs* are left to live independently and to fend for themselves in finding patrons, communities, and education, the pillars of the monastic life.

Factors in establishing a *bhikṣunī sangha*

The task of establishing a recognized *bhikṣunī sangha* in Tibetan Buddhism, however, is not easily accomplished. Many have turned to His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the expectation that he would establish it by sacred decree. Certainly His Holiness is sympathetic. As he said in an address to the 1996 conference of Western Buddhist nuns:

> The Buddha himself taught differently according to the place, the occasion, and the situation of those who were listening to him. To some extent, as Buddhist nuns, you are now participating in the evolution of a Buddhism for a new time, a time when the universal principle of the equality of all human beings takes precedence. It is heartening to observe, as your conference clearly demonstrates, that Buddhist women are casting off traditional and outmoded restraints.[9]

But His Holiness has rightly been clear that this is not his decision; the decision rests in the hands of the monastic *sangha* of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The monastic *sangha* has its own structure of transmission, decision-making, and adaptation to new cultural challenges. These must be understood if the desired changes are to take effect.

The integrity of the tradition of the monastic lineage is one of the most treasured phenomena of Asian Buddhism, and those who would like to innovate must have an appreciation for the complexities at hand. The situation in Tibetan tradition has additional

factors that make the prospects even more challenging. Respecting, even valuing, these factors is key to the success of the future of the *bhikṣuṇī saṅgha* for Tibet.

In Tibet and among Tibetan exile communities, Buddhist monasticism is a disciplined community life based on a common vow dedicated to enlightenment and enlightened society. It has not traditionally been an individual path. Monastic institutions play a role in the entire Tibetan culture, and the full flower of Buddhism, culturally speaking, has always been grounded in Buddhist monasticism. In fact, in early Indian Buddhism the word *sangha* applied only to the monastic *sangha*—it was only later that the four-fold *sangha* came to mean monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen.[10] Key to the integrity of the community are these factors: individual observance of vows; careful mentoring, training and education; conscientious practice of confession, ordination, and retreat; and unbroken transmission of tradition.

The *bhikṣuṇī saṅgha* has a unique place in Buddhist monasticism, and its structure explains a great deal about its vulnerability to extinction. In establishing the nuns' community, it is clear that the Buddha had high regard for women's capabilities for the attainment of full enlightenment, for that was the reason given for its establishment. Yet the *bhikṣuṇī* community is institutionally structured to be subject to the *bhikṣu* community; women are thus relegated to the rank of second-class citizen.[11] Generally speaking, the independent authority of women in institutional settings was not acceptable in the prevailing patriarchal societies in which Buddhism flourished, beginning with India. Many reasons are given for this pattern, but the results are embedded in the structure of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* itself, and remain in the unbroken monastic tradition in Tibet until the present day.

The Buddha solved these conflicting concerns by creating two separate orders under one rule and placing the nuns' order under the dominion of the monks' order. This relationship is made explicit by the *gurudharma*, the "eight special rules" laid down by the Buddha as additional disciplines to be followed by nuns.[12] With the acceptance of these rules the Buddha's aunt, Queen Mahāprajāpatī, and her company of 500 royal women were the founding members of the *bhikṣuṇī* order. As the *bhikṣuṇī prātimokṣa* developed, an additional 100 rules shielded the nuns from public criticism, ensured their conformity with the *bhikṣu saṅgha*, and protected them from domestic servitude to the monks. With the establishment of the *bhikṣuṇī* order, the Buddha has often been cited in the history of religions for his progressive attitude, offering women an equal opportunity to practice with serious commitment and full attention, free from the demands of domestic life. Contemporary feminist views in American Buddhism see these developments quite differently.[13]

The Tibetan monastic *sangha* is hierarchical in two ways: first, according to the *Vinaya* tradition traced back to India, seniority in the *sangha* is based on the date of ordination. This means that authority rests especially with the elders of the monastic *sangha* who have been ordained the longest. The second factor is the relationship between monks and nuns. Because the nuns' *sangha* is subject to the monks, a monk who has been ordained for even a single day holds seniority over a nun who may have been ordained for thirty years. This seniority pattern places the greatest authority with monks

who have been ordained the longest. And very often these elders are those who are the most conservative, with the greatest vested interest in the status quo.

The submission of the nuns' order to the monks' as described in the *gurudharma* appears primarily in the form of the ceremonial life of the *sangha:* in the time and location of the celebration of the *varṣā* or rainy season retreat, the *upavasatha* or confession ceremonies, the *pravāraṇa* invitation ceremony at the conclusion of the rainy season retreat, the performance of penance *(mānatta)* discipline, and ordination *(upasampadā).* In each case, the nuns' order was forbidden to carry out the ceremony without the presence or close proximity of monks; however, no such reverse situation applied. To fulfill its twice-monthly ceremonial duties, the nuns' order had to have recourse to the monks' community, and so depended on its close proximity, but the monks did not so depend on the nuns. This has powerfully affected the status of the *bhikṣuṇī* order throughout Buddhist history, both in financial support, reverence paid to the *sangha*, and in the ease with which the orders have propagated.[14]

In ordination, the *gurudharma* of the Indian *Vinaya Piṭaka* dictated that a nun must be ordained by both the *bhikṣu* and the *bhikṣuṇī sanghas*. As with the *bhikṣu sangha*, the first ordination of Mahāprajāpatī was a rather simple affair, consisting of Ānanda's delivering a message to her and her company concerning the eight special rules. Her acceptance of these, "never to be transgressed during her life," constituted her ordination.[15] Later, with the formalization of the *bhikṣu* ordination, the *bhikṣuṇī* ordination also became more elaborate. As the *sangha* spread, reasons of distance, travel, manageability, and inconvenience led to the development of an ordination ceremony that could be performed without the presence of the Buddha.[16] With this development came clearer guidelines concerning proper motivation for becoming a *bhikṣuṇī*, the qualification required of the candidate, and the necessity of successful completion of two years' novice status before applying for full ordination. These were identical with guidelines for the *bhikṣu* order, except that women who were pregnant or nursing, or who did not have the consent of their husbands, or who were of ill repute, were not allowed to join the order.[17] It appears that the age requirement was lowered for girls who had been child brides.

For the ordination itself, the proceedings of the *bhikṣuṇī* order were identical to those of the *bhikṣus*, with the exception that the ordination had to be ratified by both *sanghas*, and the ordaining nuns had to be of twelve years' standing, compared to ten years for ordaining *bhikṣus*.[18] Each *sangha* had to have at least ten presiding senior members in order for the ordination to be valid. It is not clear from the canonical texts how the ordination ceremonies were held. It is possible that a joint ceremony ordained the nuns; it is more likely that following the *bhikṣuṇī* ordination, it was ratified by an assembly of monks. All of these factors were altered somewhat in the transmission of the ordination to Southeast Asia and China. For instance, the number and qualifications of those presiding at the ordination ceremony varies slightly from country to country.

This design of the *bhikṣuṇī* order served to hamper its transmission to other cultures and its survival of persecution and repression. Because the dual ordination was necessary, the nuns' order relied on the continuity of both orders and the willingness of the *bhikṣu*

order to ordain women. When the *sangha* came under political and economic pressure, it was the *bhikṣu* order that survived; the *bhikṣunī* order has always fallen under the dominion of monks, just as the founder dictated. Whether the elder monks in the Tibetan tradition are open to innovation is the question under consideration.

Establishing the authenticity of the *bhikṣunī* texts and lineage

The decision on the future of the *bhikṣunī sangha*, then, is placed in the hands of the senior monks of the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, who must make the determination based on a variety of historical factors. First of all, there is a difference of opinion concerning the original transmission of the *bhikṣunī* ordination to Tibet. Lamas of the Kagyu and Nyingma schools commonly tell of the loss of the *bhikṣunī* ordination under the persecution of Lang-darma in 838–842 CE, when *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣunīs* were forced underground and ordinations had to occur in secret.[19] They speak of the "restoration" of the *bhikṣunī* ordination. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, however, claims that only the texts of the *bhikṣunī* tradition went to Tibet, and that there has never been a living *bhikṣunī* order of Tibetan Buddhism. There is no mention of *bhikṣunīs* in the chronicles that describe Śāntarakṣita's ordination of monks and the consecration of the first Tibetan monastery at Samye in 775. If the *bhikṣunī* ordination went to Tibet during the first spreading, it was probably later, and if there are accounts of this first transmission, they are unknown to this author. However, *bhikṣunī* texts are commonly known in the Tibetan tradition. For instance, in Roerich's *Blue Annals*, *gelongma* *(bhikṣunīs)* "who have accepted the eight chief precepts *(gurudharma),* as in the case of Mahāprajāpatī," are considered one of the ten kinds of ordained monks.[20] Later Tibetan texts speak anecdotally about individual *gelongma* nuns, as in the case of the fifteenth-century Chokyi Drönma, whose actual ordination is described.[21] Recent work suggests that the *bhikṣunī* ordination did exist in Tibet in at least the twelfth century and in the late sixteenth century, but some scholars dispute the veracity of this.[22]

The *bhikṣu vinaya* tradition that was transmitted to Tibet came from one of the original "eighteen schools" of early Indian Buddhism, the Mūlasarvāstivādin. This textual tradition differs only slightly from the version of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* transmitted to China, Korea, and Vietnam, the Dharmaguptaka, also one of the "eighteen schools." The Dharmaguptaka school is listed by Bareau as a sub-sect of the Mahiśāsaka, which was itself a sub-school of the Vibhajyavādin school, which broke from the Sarvāstivādin school in the Third Council, held under the patronage of King Aśoka at Pāṭaliputra circa 250 BCE.[23] Over the centuries, the Buddhist schools in each of these geographical areas developed their own ways of interpreting and understanding the precepts according to their cultural settings and different political, social, and historical circumstances. The Tibetan *sangha* must determine whether the Dharmaguptaka *vinaya* for the *bhikṣunī sangha* is acceptable in a Tibetan milieu.

The Dharmaguptaka transmission of the Chinese *bhikṣunī vinaya* has a fascinating history. The main body of *Vinaya Piṭaka* texts used by the Chinese tradition came from Sri Lanka and was brought by Fa-hsien to China around 420 CE.[24] Unfortunately, even though Sri Lanka had a strong *bhikṣunī saṅgha* at that time,[25] the *bhikṣunī* texts were not included in Fa-hsien's collection. Roughly twelve years later, the *bhikṣunī* transmission by Singhalese nuns occurred in a remarkable way. The *Pi-chiu-ni-chuan,* or "biographies of the *bhikṣunīs*," recounts the curiosity of Ching-chien who studied Buddhist texts in the early fourth century. When she came across references to *bhikṣunīs*, she immediately asked her teacher for ordination. Fa-shih explained that there were *bhikṣunīs* in India, but that China had only *bhikṣus*; there were no nuns in China who had received the full ordination. According to the account, he advised her to take the novice ordination, and she shaved her head, put on robes, and received the ten precepts from the *upadhyāya,* or preceptor. She founded a novice nunnery at the western gate of the capital, and took many other novice nuns as her students. In 357, shortly before her death at age 70, Ching-chien received full ordination in Lo-yang, using a translated Mahāsaṃghika *bhikṣunī* text. She was ordained by a group of *bhikṣus*; it is probable that this ordination was not authentic, because the *bhikṣunī saṅgha* was not present. Also, the biography states that even at the time of this ordination there was a disagreement concerning the adequacy of the rules themselves, causing a Chinese monk to leave in a huff.[26] However, when later Chinese *bhikṣunīs* questioned the foreign monk Guṇavarman concerning the legitimacy of this ordination, they were assured that when "the two orders were not found in one country at the same time, female applicants might receive their full ordination from the order of *bhikṣus* alone and it would be considered as legitimate."[27] Thereafter, dual ordinations were held with these new *bhikṣunīs* carrying on the tradition as best they could.[28]

According to the Chinese chronicle, a group of eight Singhalese *bhikṣunīs* came by ship to Nanking in 429 CE. When these nuns questioned the authenticity of the Chinese *bhikṣunī* ordination, the Chinese women defended it, using Mahāprajāpatī as a precedent. Nevertheless, the Singhalese *bhikṣunīs* sent for eleven additional nuns from Sri Lanka, from the Abhayagiri Vihāra Sect. These new arrivals, led by Therī Triśaraṇa, arrived in 433 CE and subsequently 300 nuns were reordained at Nan-lin Monastery, with the esteemed Sanghavarman as preceptor.[29] The *Pi-chiu-ni-chuan* noted that "this did not mean that their previous ordination was ineffective, but that they wished to increase the goodness of *Vinaya*."[30] According to the chronicles, the *bhikṣunī prātimokṣa* was translated into Chinese by Fa-hsien and Buddhabhadra in 414 CE, and the ceremonial texts, including the ordination texts, were translated by Guṇavarman in 431 CE. The *bhikṣunī* texts are preserved in the Chinese canon under the title of their school (Dharmagupta Bhikṣunī Karman Nanjio No. 1129).[31] Miu Fat Monastery claims that both the *prātimokṣa* and the ordination are Dharmaguptaka, and this is confirmed by Chinese *vinaya* scholars. With the combination of an authentic

transmission and the necessary texts available in Chinese, *bhikṣunī* monasticism became firmly grounded in China, where it thrives to the present day.

Karma Lekshe Tsomo has done the ground-breaking work of translating and comparing the *prātimokṣa* and basic *Vinaya Piṭaka* texts of these two traditions.[32] This leaves the actual analysis and determinations to be made by the elder monks of the Tibetan tradition.

Establishing the integrity of the *bhikṣunī* transmission

Next, the Tibetan *sangha* must be able to establish the integrity of the ordination ceremony itself. Have there been continuing authentic ordinations since the original transmission of the *bhikṣunī* ordinations to China? Can these ordinations be traced back through Sri Lanka to India in unbroken transmission? On this point Karma Lekshe Tsomo interviewed six reputable *vinaya* scholars in Taiwan, asking about the continuity of the *bhikṣunī* ordination.[33] They agreed that the *bhikṣunī* lineage has continued unbroken from the time it came to China until the present day, with appropriate documentation. They were quick to admit that there have been certain permutations that have not, however, seriously compromised the integrity of the lineage. The custom of dual ordination, required in the early *vinaya* texts, by both the *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣunī sanghas* has not been continued every year. Many of the ceremonies were held only by the *bhikṣunī sangha*, and during periods of severe repression of Buddhism *bhikṣunī* ordinations were held only by the *bhikṣu sangha*. Ani Lekshe has reported that generally the Chinese *vinaya* masters interviewed held the *bhikṣunī* ordination to be valid even when such circumstances prevailed.[34] The question remains whether the Tibetan order would continue to hold such a view.

Are the *bhikṣunī prātimokṣa* ordination texts from the Chinese tradition authentic? Are they parallel with the *vinaya* texts of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school of Tibetan monastic tradition? More study must be done on this as the texts are translated and compared to the Tibetan *bhikṣunī* texts. Certainly the Chinese *prātimokṣa*, translated into English, when compared with the Mūlasarvāstivāda *prātimokṣa* and the Theravāda *bhikkhunī-sutta-vibhanga,* shows that the Chinese vows are parallel in every category, with major differences appearing only in number and in the minor rules.[35] As for the ordination ceremony, the Chinese version appears identical in all counts except the stricture against leather sandals, since they are already forbidden because of the bodhisattva vow. The bodhisattva vow ceremony has been added to the Chinese ordination, which includes a vow of vegetarianism and the burning of a moxa incense cone on at least three places in a line across the head.[36]

Unique issues in the Tibetan setting

The issue of the future of the *bhikṣuṇī* order in Tibetan Buddhism has special considerations because of the unique dilemmas of Tibet. Now that the occupation of Tibet nears its fiftieth year, the exiled heads of the four schools face many issues of succession and continuity of tradition. Tibetan institutions rely on two major methods of continuity: preservation of the integrity of the monastic transmissions, and the protection of the *tulku* tradition of reincarnate lamas. Each of these institutional forms has different priorities, methods of recognition, and functions within the complex phenomenon of Tibetan Buddhism.[37]

Monastic concerns of Tibetan society relate to issues of discipline, conduct, education, and institutional power and to goals other than, but not necessarily contrary to, enlightenment. Monastic Buddhism places greater emphasis upon the gradual path based upon purifying one's karma through accumulation of merit, renouncing unvirtuous actions, scholastic mastery of texts, debate, and preservation of the monastic tradition. In contrast, the *tulku* tradition is related more to the shamanic or yogic dimensions, and places its emphasis upon spiritual and societal transformation through yogic practice, empowerments, divination, and transmission relying on views of reality other than prevailing conventional norms. These two orientations are joined in the persons of the great heads of the four major lineages, such as the Gyalwa Karmapa and the Dalai Lama, for whom the continuation of both of these approaches has been important. These leaders and the monastic elders have many considerations when looking to the future of Tibetan Buddhism.

Because of these complexities, Tibetan culture and religion are in peril in a variety of ways. Those monastic institutions still based in Tibet under Chinese rule have suffered from destruction and suppression, though since 1980 the policy of pervasive persecution was reversed as the monastic institution was re-envisioned by the Chinese leaders as a "collectivity."[38] Under Chinese patronage, great monasteries such as Drepung have experienced an impressive revival, though under strict controls with regard to population numbers and activities. Even so, in Tibet there are tremendous cultural pressures on these monastic centers that relate to political tensions under Chinese rule.

With the 1980 thaw in suppression of the monasteries in Tibet, thousands of young women flocked to join nunneries. By 1989, with new repressive Chinese measures in place, nuns either fled to India in record numbers or actively resisted Chinese rule. The remaining novice nunneries near Lhasa became hotbeds of political resistance, as nuns publicly demonstrated, refusing to renounce loyalty to the Dalai Lama as contrary to their practice of Buddhism. Individual nuns have become renowned martyrs for the Tibetan cause, enduring years of imprisonment, torture, and solitary confinement. Phuntsok Nyidron, Ngawang Sangdrol, and Ama Adhe are only a few nuns who have been honored by international peace movements for their determined resistance to Chinese imprisonment and torture.[39] The nuns who fled Tibet in the late 1980s formed a new generation of assertive, committed women who have sought education and a strong monastic community.[40] Whether they seek the *bhikṣuṇī* ordination is unknown to this author.

The complexities of life for the Tibetan monastic community in exile are many. There are large, successful branches of ancestral Tibetan monasteries throughout South Asia. All the major schools have opened branch monasteries of the mighty historic centers of Tibet, and these branches are located in the Himalayas and the valleys of northern India, and in south India, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. Nepal alone has over 800 Nyingma monasteries. Yet these monasteries must compete for patronage and resources, and their abbots and major *tulkus* work tirelessly at fundraising for the Indian monks as well as for the restoration and support of the ancestral monasteries and monastic communities in Tibet.

Because these monasteries rely heavily on Western donors for patronage, considerations of the future of the monastic order have intense but conflicting pressures. Of course monastic elders wish to preserve the integrity and purity of monastic vows, ordinations, *shedra* or monastic college education, and community discipline. This is often difficult in the face of secularization and the economic pressures that surround the monastic communities in exile, as well as the political exigencies in Tibet. At the same time, pressures to fit Western orientalist fantasies about the idyllic Tibetan spirituality have deeply influenced the entire exile Tibetan community.[41] While little has been written about the monk as "prisoner of Shangri-la" in the scramble for financial support through tours of monastic lama dancers and sand *maṇḍala* artists, no doubt Tibetan monks and their elders have cooperated in the fantasies in order to ensure their own future.

Within the context of the Tibetan diaspora, one wonders whether the establishment of a *bhikṣuṇī* order is a very high priority for Tibetan monastic elders or even for Tibetan novice nuns. Sara Schneiderman suggests that Western women's aspirations for a fully ordained *sangha* might be an expression of cultural appropriation:

> As Western women of my generation begin to participate in this process of appropriation, it may be precisely our independence and self-confidence, inculcated in many from a young age, that allow us to adopt Buddhist traditions as positive, empowering ones…. Coming from cultures that do not encourage such values, young women such as the ethnically Tibetan nuns at the Himalayan monastery…may not have the same freedom and ease of access from which to build a relationship with Buddhist traditions on their own terms.[42]

Nevertheless, given the long-term concerns for the survival of the monastic tradition in Tibetan Buddhism, the dependence upon Western patronage and media coverage, and the numerous manifestations of adaptations of traditional forms that Tibetan teachers are attempting, along with the gentle prodding of leaders like the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa, the monastic elders may find themselves joining in support of this cultural appropriation and may actually establish a *bhikṣuṇī* order for Tibet. After all, the future of Tibetan monastic life may rest to some degree on these committed Western women inspired to practice a life of renunciation and meditation in the face of many obstacles. For Tibetan Buddhism, the inclusion of these Western *bhikṣuṇīs* in the Tibetan cause may be of benefit to everyone involved.

Notes

1 Chodron 1981–1982, 21; Friedman 1987, 97–99.
2 Fields 1981, 278–281.
3 Prebish 1999, 51.
4 Chodron 1981–1982, 21–22.
5 Chodron 1999, 82. See also Tsomo 2002, 263.
6 Tsomo 1988; Tsomo 1999; Tsomo 2002.
7 Tsomo 2002, 263.
8 Tenzin Kacho, personal communication, May 2004.
9 Chodron 2000.
10 Prebish 1999, 204–206.
11 Gross 1993, 29–48; Sponberg 1992, 13–18.
12 *Cullavagga* X.1.4.
13 Horner 1930, 95–117; Gross 1993, 32–38; Tsomo 1999, 6–7.
14 Tsai 1981, 3; Falk 1980.
15 *Cullavagga* X.1.4.5; X2.1–2.
16 Holt 1983, 106–119.
17 *Suttavibhanga Bhikkhunī-pātimokkha*, Pācittiya LXI—LXXXIII. As for the other schools, see Kabilsingh 1984; Tsomo 1996.
18 *Mahāvagga* I.31.5–8; Nun's Pac. LXXIV.
19 Samuel 1993, 287; 602 n. 16.
20 Roerich 1949, 33.
21 The biography includes details of the noble woman's novice ordination as well as her *gelongma* ordination, taken in Choding sometime between 1444 and 1450. The text states, "in the midst of a large and very distinguished *sangha* she became an actual *bhikṣuṇī*" (Schaeffer 2003, 4–5). The translator details five other sources that describe Chokyi Dronma as a *gelongma*.
22 Dan Martin, in Gyatso and Havnevik 2005.
23 Bareau 1955, 30.
24 Pachow 1980, 199.
25 The transmission of the *bhikṣuṇī Vinaya* to Sri Lanka, recorded in the *Dīpavaṃsa*, occurred during the reign of King Aśoka (269–232 BCE). With the fall of Anuradhapura to the South Indian Cola dynasty in 1017 CE, the lineage of the monastic *sangha* was extinguished. After Vijaya Bāhu I drove out the Colas in 1055–1111, he reestablished the *bhikṣu sangha* by inviting elders from Burma to perform the ordination. See Weeraratne 1970, Falk 1980, Kabilsingh 1984.
26 Li Jung-hsi 1981, 28; Tsai 1994, 19.
27 Weeraratne 1970, 336; Tsai 1994, 37.
28 Pachow 1980, 199.
29 Tsai 1994, 37–38; 128 n. 10.
30 Li Jung-hsi 1981, 81.
31 Pachow 1980, 224. There were probably earlier translations *prātimokṣa*, but they have been lost; in addition, their accuracy is in question. See Tsai 1994.
32 Tsomo 1996. The *Mūlasarvāstivādin-bhikṣuṇī-vinaya-vibhanga* has also recently been translated from Tibetan by doctoral student Cindy Crowhurst, under the direction of Leslie Kawamura at the University of Calgary, Canada.
33 The information in this paragraph is drawn from correspondence between Karma Lekshe Tsomo and Tendzin Choegyal of the office of H.H. the Dalai Lama immediately after her ordination, in 1982–1983.
34 Tsomo 1982–3 (personal communication).

35 See Kabilsingh 1984; Tsomo 1996.

36 This is controversial among Tibetan *bhikṣunīs* because the vow of vegetarianism is contrary to Tibetan custom; in addition, the burning of moxa is considered an unnecessary body mutilation for the *bhikṣunī*, and is also seen as contrary to Tibetan practices.

37 Samuel 1993, 3–23.

38 Goldstein 1998, 27.

39 http://www.savetibet.org/, Blakeslee and Tapontsang 1997.

40 Meo 2002. A western *bhikṣunī* informant reported anecdotally that monks and nuns are leaving the nunneries

> in droves. A recent call from a nun at my nunnery in India told me almost all the young nuns that were there since I last stayed (1996–7) have left, gotten married, and tried to go to the West. This nun called me from a phone she had installed in her own room.
>
> (Tenzin Kacho, 2004; personal communication)

This is evidently a result of secularization, and the general pressures that globalization and consumerism are placing on refugees. It is also a phenomenon deeply affecting monks as well. She continued, “At the recent Kalachakra initiation in Canada, there were about eighteen disrobed monks from the Dalai Lama’s monastery attending the event. The Tibetans are baffled that Westerners choose simplicity over our inherited materialism.”

41 Lopez 1998; Dodin and Rather 2001.

42 Schneiderman 1999, 227.

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Part II
BUDDHIST TRADITIONS

5
THE TIME OF *ŌJŌDEN*

Narrative and salvation in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism

Michael Bathgate

The field of Buddhist Studies has benefited greatly from a dramatic expansion in both the range and the scope of contemporary scholarship. In large part, this salutary trend has been linked with the re-examination of what Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen have described as "an implicit two-tiered sociology of knowledge" at work in Buddhist Studies.[1] This scholarly prejudice has tended to equate monastic texts and practices with "authentic" Buddhism, relegating the expressions and experiences of the laity—and, thus, of the vast majority of Buddhists—to the periphery, as derivative (if not corrupt) reflections of authoritative discourse.

Questioning this narrowly delimited identification of Buddhism with monasticism, a number of scholars have worked to develop a broader view of the tradition, one that places both lay and monastic practices in perspective. As Charles Prebish has suggested, for example, the study of Buddhist ethics has profited by expanding its scope from the narrower field of *vinaya* to the more inclusive category of *śīla*, a shift that has permitted a clearer appreciation of the ethics of lay life, as well as the institutional orientation of monastic regulations.[2] In a similar fashion, a number of studies have begun to take seriously the religious significance of a range of extra-canonical textual sources, especially the ubiquitous genres of story literature (including *avadāna* and *setsuwa*) that have played a prominent part in the tradition since its beginnings. These narrative forms have been shown to reproduce and critically engage not only the figures and contours of the popular religious imagination, but also some of the central concerns of scholarly literature.[3]

This chapter will consider the function of story literature in the Japanese Pure Land tradition, particularly the genre of religious biography known as *ōjōden*. These accounts of people who achieved birth in Buddha Amida's Pure Land were initially compiled between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, inspired in large part by similar collections composed in Tang-dynasty China.[4] As recent studies of both Chinese and Japanese genres have suggested, these tales of salvation in Amida's Land of Utmost Bliss (Sanskrit: *sukhāvatī*, Japanese: *gokuraku jōdo*) were closely linked to the scriptural and systematic discourse of Pure Land Buddhism. Thus, for example, the first Japanese *ōjōden* collection (the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*, which served as the model for similar works compiled over the next 200 years) appears to have been the product of a close collaboration between its author, the literatus Yoshishige no Yasutane, and the Tendai Pure Land thinker Genshin. Drawing on the precedent established by the earliest Chinese

collection—the seventh-century *Jingtulun,* which included twenty tales of birth as a kind of narrative appendix to a larger work of systematic doctrinal commentary—Yasutane's stories represented what Frederic Kotas has described as a "companion piece" to Genshin's seminal Pure Land treatise *Ōjōyōshū*.[5] Indeed, not only do Yasutane's accounts of his protagonists' deathbed experiences appear to be closely patterned on the ritual practices and psychological ideals described in the *Ōjōyōshū,* but the *Ōjōyōshū* itself explicitly commends Yasutane's *ōjōden* to its readers.[6]

Like others of his day, Yasutane struggled to define the place of literary pursuits within the context of a life devoted to Buddhist values.[7] In the preface to the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki,* he justified his compilation of birth stories with a statement on the shared goals of monastic and literary discourse, quoting with approval the following comment by the author of the *Jingtulun:*

> Lacking in wisdom, sentient beings do not comprehend [the proofs for salvation offered in the *sūtras* and commentaries]. Unless one records cases of people who actually achieved birth in the Pure Land, it will be impossible to encourage their hearts and minds.[8]

Taken out of its proper context, such a statement would appear to support a view of *ōjōden* as an essentially derivative genre, the easily accessible illustrations of theoretical principles elaborated in scripture and scholarly commentaries. Rather than a statement about the limits of the genre, however, Yasutane's comments should be understood as part of the larger literary *apologia* of his times, one that emphasized the indispensable religious value of narratives like *ōjōden*. By describing tales of birth as a means to lead those of limited understanding toward higher forms of realization, Yasutane implicitly evokes the rhetoric of expedient devices (Sanskrit: *upāya,* Japanese: *hōben*), a claim to religious legitimacy that lay, not in the subordination of *ōjōden* to other genres of discourse, but in the particular virtues of these tales to extend the saving Truth of the *Dharma* to all beings. Any attempt to approach these texts on their own terms (rather than as a poor reflection of some other genre or form of discourse) must take such claims seriously.

For their authors, the collection and recounting of these narratives was clearly part and parcel of a fundamentally salvific endeavor, one which sought birth in the Pure Land both for themselves and for their audiences. In describing their contribution to this enterprise, authors of *ōjōden* repeatedly stress two fundamental goals for their compilations. As one author puts it, "they were recorded, not for wealth or fame, but rather to establish karmic connections *(kechien)* and to encourage *(kanjin).*"[9] That is, as Yasutane's reference to the *Jingtulun* suggests, tales of birth were sought as a means to promote and encourage both the author and his readers in their resolve to be born in the Pure Land themselves. At the same time, these tales were also understood to assist in the creation of karmic ties between those who have achieved salvation and those who have yet to do so. These twin principles of *kanjin* and *kechien*—which informed not only the compilation of *ōjōden* but also much of the subsequent history of Buddhist evangelism in Japan—were bound up with nothing less than the formation of a shared community of salvation, linking author and audience, seeker and saved within the embrace of Amida's compassionate vows.[10]

In the pages that follow, this chapter will consider the ways in which *ōjōden* worked to accomplish these aims. In so doing, it will focus less on the documentary value of these texts as windows into the religious landscape of the period than on the specifically soteriological functions of *ōjōden* as a narrative form, what Hallisey and Hansen describe—following Dominic LaCapra—as the "worklike dimension" of these texts.[11] Such an approach, I will argue, not only suggests a useful perspective on certain unresolved issues in the history of Pure Land biography as a whole, but also provides an orientation to *ōjōden* literature, not simply as an *adjunct* to Pure Land scripture and scholasticism, but as their *complement*.

The encouraging examples of history

The individuals who appear in *ōjōden* (known as *ōjōnin*, or people who have achieved birth) are a strikingly diverse lot: monks and laity, men and women, wonder-working saints and pious devotees, renunciants, killers, and courtiers, all appear as the beneficiaries of Amida's saving vows. Their stories, however, tend to present a consistent (even stereotypical) narrative structure.[12] Protagonists are typically introduced by name, often accompanied by information about their birthplace, family, social rank, and religious status. An abbreviated description of their religious or secular career often follows, focusing primarily on the character traits and religious practices that bear most directly—either as contributing factors or as obstacles to be overcome—on their ultimate achievement of salvation in the Pure Land. Indeed, even when the author draws on more detailed historical records, the biographical elements of these tales are usually condensed. The sequence of events is subordinated to the inevitable centerpiece of all *ōjōden* accounts: the depiction of the protagonist's death and the signs indicating their birth in Sukhāvatī.

While there remains some room for idiosyncrasy in their portrayal, scenes of characters' final moments usually feature a number of recurring themes. The moment of death, for example, is usually accompanied by ritual observances, ranging from a simple westward-facing calling of Amida's name to more elaborate collective exercises featuring incense, music, iconography, and the recitation of Pure Land scriptures. In most accounts, death occurs painlessly in the midst of these practices—an auspicious indication of their state of mind at the final moment, suggestive of a successful transition to the Pure Land.[13] Indeed, the bulk of *ōjōden* narratives are typically committed to recounting a range of signs and wonders *(isō)* intended to corroborate the salvation of their protagonists. The moment of death, for example, is often portrayed in terms suggestive of the imagery of Amida's descent *(raigō)*, including the appearance of purple clouds, celestial music, and preternatural fragrances. In a similar fashion, prophecies and visions often figure prominently, and those about to pass on to the Pure Land are frequently credited with preternatural foreknowledge of the time and circumstances of their death. Furthermore, the living who remain behind may report dream-visions of the recently deceased, accompanied by the celestial entourage on their way to the Pure Land or ensconced on a lotus in the presence of the *Tathāgata* and bodhisattvas.[14] Finally, salvation in the Pure Land may also be confirmed by the condition of the body after death, retaining its

prayerful posture—legs crossed, hands locked in *mudrā*—without signs of putrefaction. In at least one case, the body simply vanishes altogether.[15]

Ōjōden can thus be described as a form of biography, but one in which the lives portrayed are shaped by an overriding emphasis on the life to come. Events of a lifetime are elided or foreshortened in order to focus on the protagonist's preparation for the end, and an array of marvels are brought to bear to indicate the extraordinary character of those final moments. Even as these characteristics have rendered the genre difficult to categorize within the framework of Japanese literary historiography—in large part because of a perceived incompatibility between historical and marvelous narrative—they nevertheless appear to be directly motivated by the overarching religious goals of their authors.[16] As part of a fundamentally hagiographic enterprise, these accounts were recorded, not simply for the sake of future historical record, but to contribute to the deliverance of readers and authors alike, to provide encouragement for those seeking precisely the sort of salvation recounted in its pages.

In this regard, several studies have considered the role of *ōjōden* as sacred biography, focusing especially on the exemplary character of these narratives. Emphasizing the close parallels between these tales and the models for deathbed practice *(rinjū gyōgi)* elaborated in Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū*, for example, Frederic Kotas has described birth accounts as "practical examples of the 'craft of dying well' as defined by Genshin," providing the reader with "models to be emulated" in their own pursuit of salvation.[17] Indeed, a number of tales not only describe the practices performed by successful *ōjōnin*, but also appear to advocate some practices over others. Thus, for example, the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* recounts the story of Myōshō, a priest whose preferred practice of esoteric Buddhism *(mikyō)* fails to provide him with the comfort he seeks in his final days. During an illness, he calls his disciples to him and declares, "The fires of hell appear in the distance before these sick eyes. What can save a person except the *nembutsu*? I must certainly practice the *nembutsu* along with others." Chanting the Buddha's name with his disciples, his vision of hell was gradually replaced with one of the celestial entourage, coming to usher him to the Pure Land.[18]

Certainly, portrayals of tranquil final moments—where the departing protagonist focuses his or her thoughts away from the pain and entanglements of this world onto the promise of Amida's saving vows—present an appealing scene. And the recurrence of marvelous signs confirming their salvation would certainly suggest that those who follow their example do not do so in vain. Despite the evident parallels between *ōjōden* and the ritual paradigms presented in manuals for deathbed practice, however, the "craft of dying well" presented in birth accounts involves more than the "practical examples" of their protagonists. As a form of narrative, birth accounts represent not simply the listing of paradigmatic practices but the telling of a life, an engagement with what Paul Ricoeur has called the "basic historicity of human experience."[19] More than a matter of generic convention, the tendency of *ōjōden* to foreshorten the lives of their protagonists around the preparation for their inevitable end suggests a particular orientation to the scope and significance of those lives. The practices by which individuals obtain birth in the Pure Land may differ from one narrative to the next, but their placement within the course of a life provided a unifying theme that the readers of these stories would have been encouraged to apply to their own lives. As a narrative, in other words, *ōjōden* provided not simply an exemplary set of events but also an exemplary perspective on those events,

an overarching teleology from which to reconsider the accomplishments and idiosyncrasies of one's own life in terms of their significance for the life to come.

As John Stratton Hawley has noted, however, exemplary narratives may constitute an example in more than one sense of the term. Paralleling Clifford Geertz' classic distinction between the "models of" and "models for" at work in religious ritual, Hawley suggests that sacred biography provides "examples of" as well as "examples to," cases in point as well as objects of emulation.[20] Thus, while many birth accounts appear to illustrate ritual paradigms—the documentary value of which have been exploited by studies of Pure Land ritual—*ōjōden* collections as a whole appear to have been compiled as part of a larger enterprise. This enterprise might be described not simply as didactic but as *cosmographic,* an effort to change behavior by addressing the worldviews that inform it.[21] Like the larger genre of tale literature *(setsuwa bungaku)* with which it is often associated, for example, *ōjōden* are careful to emphasize both the marvelous nature of their subjects and their essential historicity.

As Yasutane describes them, these narratives represent "actual cases of people who achieved birth in the Pure Land," and the wondrous signs that filled them only increased their value as supporting evidence to encourage the faith and practice of those who encountered them.[22] Indeed, the importance of such corroboration appears to have been a characteristic element of Pure Land practice. The *Ōjōyōshū* chapter on deathbed practices, for example, advises those who attend the dying to carefully record auspicious signs and visions reported by their charge, a practice that would appear to be less for the guidance of the person departing this life than for the encouragement of those who remain behind.[23] In a similar fashion, the author of each *ōjōden* collection presents himself as participating in a shared documentary project, contributing tales of *ōjō* not recorded in previous works.

In emphasizing the historicity of their subjects, these tales present what Kotas has described as a "literature of proof," providing corroborating evidence of Amida's saving power at work in the lives of the Japanese.[24] In these stories, the proliferation of signs and wonders is matched only by the array of witnesses who report them, including not only those close to the departed *ōjōnin* but also independent bystanders, who support the veracity of the tale precisely by their ignorance of its meaning. Thus, for example, the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* relates the tale of Jin'yū, whose final hours were accompanied by a brilliant light that illuminated the nighttime darkness of his mountain retreat as if it were midday. This light was seen, we are told, not only by those in attendance on the dying man, but by the people of a nearby village, who at first mistook it for a forest fire.[25]

Nevertheless, such marvelous testimonials—supporting the actuality of birth in Sukhāvatī and the efficacy of Pure Land practices to attain it—appear to have been only one aspect of the evidentiary and encouraging function of these texts. More than a history of the saved, *ōjōden* narratives present a history of salvation, demonstrating not simply the historical reality of *ōjō* but also the historical conditions under which it is possible. This may help to account for the inclusion within these collections of a number of figures whose degree of spiritual attainment and careers as wonder-workers seem to render them objects more of admiration than of imitation.[26] After the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* was completed, for example, Yasutane (now living as a renunciant with the religious name Jakushin) returned to his collection at the instigation of an imperial prince in order to add two additional accounts: that of the early Buddhist supporter Prince Shōtoku and that of

the popularly acclaimed bodhisattva Gyōgi.[27] Although these stories represent virtual staples of Japanese devotional literature, the tale of Gyōgi makes no explicit reference to his birth in Amida's Pure Land, and the story of Shōtoku refers only to the desire of the Koguryŏ monk Eji, upon learning of Shōtoku's death, to join him in the Pure Land. Indeed, it seems likely that the "Pure Land" mentioned by Eji refers not to Sukhāvatī at all, but to the Pure Land of the bodhisattva Kannon (Sanskrit: Avalokiteśvara), with whom Shōtoku was identified.[28] Rather than a sign of the author's failure to preserve the integrity of his work in the face of a more general religious enthusiasm, however, the inclusion of these tales only serves to highlight a motif already present in the collection. After all, Shōtoku and Gyōgi are not the only bodhisattvas to appear in Yasutane's collection; he reserves similar praise for the itinerant holy man *(hijiri)* and Pure Land popularizer Kūya.[29]

The accounts of these individuals appear among the longest of *ōjōden* narratives, emphasizing less the preparation for their own salvation than their contributions to the salvation of others. Just as Kūya is credited with using his saving power to promulgate the *nembutsu* beyond the confines of the monasteries into the general populace, Shōtoku and Gyōgi represent the earlier foundations of Buddhism more generally, without which the *nembutsu* would have been meaningless. In a similar (if more limited) fashion, the careers of other wonder-working Pure Land teachers are also described in detail. Readers learn, for example, of Tendai abbot Ennin's study in China, returning to Japan with such central Pure Land practices as the recitation of Amida's name and the Lotus repentance rite *(hokke zenpō)* that recur in subsequent accounts of deathbed practices (including those of Ennin himself).[30]

In sum, the encouragement offered by *ōjōden* is closely linked to the history that it presents to its readers. In these accounts, individuals—much like the authors and readers of the collections themselves—are able to attain birth in Amida's Pure Land, thanks in no small part to the compassionate efforts of a series of greater and lesser transmitters of the faith. Indeed, the early twelfth-century sequel to the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*—Ōe no Masafusa's *Zoku honchō ōjōden*—includes Yasutane himself within these ranks, describing him as a man of profound commitment and deep compassion, whose birth in the Pure Land was followed by his return to the world as a bodhisattva.[31] In short, these accounts, when taken together, present an image of a particularly Japanese communion of saviors and saved. While Japanese *ōjōden* could be said to be inspired by both the promise of salvation expressed in Pure Land scripture and the literary forms of Chinese tales of birth, the collection of Japanese tales of birth also represented a response to those collections, documenting what could be called a specifically Japanese history of salvation.[32]

It is precisely in their capacity to describe this history that these narratives reveal their complementarity with—rather than their simple derivation from—the scriptures and commentaries that constitute more canonical forms of Pure Land discourse. In a fashion analogous to the contemporaneous European genres of *auctoritates, rationes,* and *exempla* described by Jacques LeGoff, *ōjōden* narratives operated at the immediate time of local records and human memory—authors of *ōjōden* often claim "old people" as one of their sources for material—rather than the almost unimaginable past of Pure Land scripture or the "didactic present" of systematic argument. Expressed within a time frame measured in human generations rather than *kalpas,* these tales served to bridge the chasm

separating the cosmogonic origins of the Pure Land related in the *sūtras* from the doctrinal exposition and ritual paradigms of texts like Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū*.

Indeed, the need to contextualize (and affirm) the saving power of Amida's primordial vows within the experience of contemporary Japan may have been particularly acute given the prevalence of that theory of sacred history that characterized the time in which *ōjōden* were being compiled as the beginning of the Final Age of the *Dharma (mappō)*, when salvation would be endangered by the degeneration of the tradition and those who uphold it. In this context, Japanese tales of birth in the Pure Land served to encourage the faith and practice of devotees, not only by demonstrating the possibility of *ōjō* but by demonstrating its possibility in this particular time and place, an implicit apology for Pure Land aspirations during the Final Age. LeGoff's characterization of *exempla* thus seems equally apposite for *ōjōden.* "Its time," he writes, "was caught up in a dialectic between the time of history and that of salvation," a dialectic which inspired no less tension in Japan than in Europe's central Middle Ages.[33]

Telling the ties that bind

As a literary genre, accounts of birth in the Pure Land reveal the influence of Indian Buddhist narrative forms as well as the conventions of Chinese historiography. In addition to asserting the historical conditions enabling the pursuit of *ōjō* in Japan, many *ōjōden* narratives also concern themselves with tracing the karmic conditions of that pursuit, often locating the antecedents of the present in the events of previous lives. In a fashion reminiscent of earlier *avadāna* literature, for example, one tale from the *Shūi ōjōden* tells the story of a monk of Higo province who, after a lifetime's dedication to Buddhist practice, took up living with a woman in his fiftieth year. Despite her devotion to him, "performing all the duties of a wife," the monk insisted that she not be present at his final moments, and demanded that the other monks in attendance not even notify her of his condition until he was already dead. Only when she was informed of his auspicious death and passage into the Pure Land did the reasons for the monk's strange insistence become clear. Overwhelmed, not with grief but with fury, the woman exclaimed that she had followed the monk from one life to the next over much of the past *kalpa*, acting as his servant and mate in order to *prevent* him escaping from the cycle of birth-and-death. Only by excluding her from his final moments in this life, turning from her clinging devotion to the saving power of Amida, had he succeeded in escaping her clutches.[34]

Unlike the events recounted in *jātaka* or *avadāna*, however, the time of *ōjōden* narratives stands at a conspicuous remove from the time of Śākyamuni, a fact with important consequences for the nature of the karmic histories they relate.[35] Unable to rely on a Buddha's superhuman knowledge of individuals' past-life histories, the characters in Japanese birth narratives must depend on more limited sources of knowledge. Like the signs that indicate a successful birth in the Pure Land, *ōjōden* typically make reference to marvelous phenomena to indicate the hidden workings of karmic cause and effect. The *Shūi ōjōden*, for example, describes the *ōjō* of a six-year-old, whose uncanny affinity for Pure Land practice from the age of three suggests the continuation of Pure Land devotion from a previous life.[36] Most commonly, the influence of past-life karma is made known in dreams, as in the widely reproduced tale of the monks Chikō and Raikō, first told in

the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*. Friends from youth, the two monks shared the same room, but while Chikō dedicated himself to study, Raikō gradually seemed to lose interest in traditional monastic pursuits, spending his last years in a state of apparent indolence. When Raikō died, Chikō was overcome with doubts about his friend's ultimate fate. After months of worry, Chikō had a dream in which he found himself in Sukhāvatī, face to face with his departed friend. When Chikō asked how this could have happened, Raikō explained that the foundation for his birth had been laid in past lives, and that his rebirth as the monk Raikō had been committed to the constant visualization of Amida's paradise rather than to study or ritual. Upon awaking from his dream, Chikō dedicated his life to a similar visualization practice, and the account ends with a declaration that his pursuit of *ōjō* was ultimately successful.[37]

As in the story of Chikō and Raikō, discussions of karmic cause and effect seem to figure most prominently in what might be called marginal cases of *ōjō*, where birth in the Pure Land is subject to difficulty or doubt. Frequently, the obstacles that stand in the way of salvation are traced, not to the mysterious events of past lives—a causal chain that remains only dimly perceived without the omniscient narration of a *Tathāgata*—but to the actions and desires of this life. Thus, for example, the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* tells the story of the wife of a provincial governor, whose pursuit of *ōjō* was hindered by two carp that she had once released into a well, perhaps as a misguided act of Buddhist charity, saving the lives of animals given to her for food but condemning them to a life of confinement. Asking her husband to save the fish from their narrow prison, her own salvation became possible, and the tale ends with a standard account of her auspicious death.[38] A similar tale from the same collection presents a striking report of the posthumous *ōjō* of a monk named Mukū. Concerned for the well-being of his disciples after his death, he secreted away a considerable sum of money, but died without telling anyone of the treasure. Appearing to a friend in a dream, he told him that he had been reborn, not in the Pure Land but in the form of a serpent. Explaining that it was the money that kept him snared within the bonds of birth-and-death, he asked that it be used to commission copies of the *Lotus Sūtra*. This friend did as he was asked, discovering not only the hidden money, but also a small snake coiled among the coins. Once the money had been spent, the monk appeared to him again, thanking him for his efforts on his behalf and announcing his successful birth in Sukhāvatī.[39]

Such cases of *ōjō* hindered by the actions and attachments of this life reflect a similar concern expressed in other Pure Land literature. The *Ōjōyōshū* chapter on deathbed practices, for example, advises that one's final moments should take place in a retreat set aside for that purpose, in order to avoid feelings of attachment to this world brought on by the sight of familiar surroundings and possessions.[40] While the *Ōjōyōshū* is concerned primarily with the aspirant's state of mind at the end, however, *ōjōden* narratives extend that concern over the span of an entire life, presenting the moment of death as the culmination of a lifetime's choices and their often unintended consequences. At the same time, they also suggest that such obstacles are ultimately surmountable. In *ōjōden*, the hindrances to salvation appear not simply in terms of subjective desires and motivations but as the objective outcomes of past actions, actions that can be expiated not only by oneself but by others. Pure Land ritual manuals often recommended the formation of support groups whereby individuals might support one another in their devotions, and

ōjōden suggested that such "good friends" *(zenchishiki)* might contribute directly in the soteriological efforts of their fellows.[41]

The importance of past karma and the possibility of atonement are at the heart of those accounts known as *akunin ōjō* ("the birth of evil people"), in which an individual is able to overcome a lifetime at odds with the *Dharma* to gain salvation in Amida's Pure Land. In the preface to the first Japanese *ōjōden* collection, the author Yasutane praises the inspirational example of "ox-butchers and fowl merchants" described in Chinese collections, who repent their unwholesome livelihoods and achieve birth by engaging in Pure Land practices.[42] The subsequent *Zoku honchō ōjōden*—the first collection to record Japanese examples of *akunin ōjō*—presents two stories of provincial governors from the Minamoto clan as particularly reassuring in this regard.[43] One of these describes the blood-drenched career of the warlord Yoriyoshi, who eventually turned from his brutal efforts to assert the military hegemony of the Minamoto—the severed heads of his victims are described as beyond count—and devoted his life to the practice of the *nembutsu*. His birth in Sukhāvatī, the reader learns, was corroborated by the dreams of many people. The other portrays the venal careerism of Noritō, whose dedication to the pursuit of wealth and status was matched only by his devoted practice of Pure Land ritual. Reciting the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* forty-nine times every day, he was able to face his death in the proper state of mind, and was born into Amida's paradise. Tales such as these, the author explains, exemplify the capacity of all sentient beings to achieve birth in the Pure Land, no matter how degenerate their life may have been. It is a notion that would likely have been particularly encouraging to the court literati who constituted the bulk of those who composed and read these collections.

Not only did accounts such as these work to chart the karmic conditions of *ōjō*—an important element in what I have called their cosmographic function—they also served to establish those conditions. In compiling these narratives, the authors of *ōjōden* collections sought to forge karmic ties *(kechien)* between those who had achieved birth in the Pure Land and those who had yet to do so. If the cosmographic function of these texts could be said to depend upon their exemplary character, their karmic function appears to have been closely linked to the opportunities they provided for authors and readers alike to *witness* salvation, a term which, like "example," suggests two complementary meanings. In one sense of the term, the collection and transmission of these tales allowed authors and copyists to bear witness to the *ōjō* of others, a compassionate act of evangelism that would certainly contribute to one's own stores of merit. At the same time, however, such testimony also provided an opportunity for those who encountered these tales to witness salvation in a more fundamental sense, one bound up with the essentially vicarious quality of *ōjōden* as narrative. Insofar as narrative can be said to eschew the abstract in favor of the concrete, it represents an opportunity to encounter—however imaginatively—the experience of another, to share the specificities of the particular time and place that gives them shape. Like the "good friends" that commonly figure in the deathbed scenes of *ōjōden* and ritual manuals alike, readers of birth narratives are thus able to participate in the auspicious final moments of an *ōjōnin*. At the same time, the act of narration itself creates a bond between the teller of the tale and its audience, forging relationships between author and reader, living and dead, a communion centered on the promise of salvation in Amida's Pure Land.

***Ōjōden* and the history of Pure Land narrative**

Like any other literary genre, the six extant collections that scholarship typically equates with the main body of *ōjōden* narratives were in many respects a product of their particular time, socio-politically as well as religiously. Compiled during the Heian period (794–1185), they were entirely the work of court literati, before the epochal shift of political power into the hands of the provincial warrior class and the establishment of the military government *(bakufu)* in Kamakura.[44] Of perhaps greater importance still, they were composed before the watershed development within the Pure Land tradition of the exclusive *(senju) nembutsu* teachings of Hōnen and the "other-power" *(tariki)* teachings of Shinran. Accounts of birth into the Pure Land continued to appear in tale literature compiled by monks, but it would not be until the seventeenth century—when the rise of a popular printing industry saw the redistribution of the original Heian collections—that *ōjōden* again began to be composed in substantial numbers.[45]

Relying implicitly on the "two-tiered sociology of knowledge" noted at the beginning of this chapter, Kasahara Kazuo has characterized the post-Heian decline of *ōjōden* as a fundamental shift in Pure Land discourse "beyond hagiography to doctrine."[46] As I have suggested in the preceding pages, however, narrative appears to have functioned alongside doctrine, the complement to systematic reflection rather than its vulgar imitation. By emphasizing, not simply the content of *ōjōden*—the rituals of their protagonists or the doctrinal commitments of their compilers—but their characteristic functions as narrative, it becomes possible to pursue a more complex and nuanced understanding of the historical relationship between these forms of discourse. From this perspective, the decline in *ōjōden* compilation may be located, less in its simple eclipse by a more legitimate form of systematic discourse than in the growing incompatibility between those doctrines and the functions of birth narratives as they were understood by their authors.

In this chapter, I have focused on the ways in which *ōjōden* served their authors' intent to provide both *kanjin* and *kechien* for themselves and their readers. On the one hand, birth accounts worked to describe the conditions—karmic and historical—that continued to support the *ōjō* of Japanese, however far removed they might be from the time and place of the historical Buddha. On the other hand, they also worked to create those conditions, by forging karmic and psychological bonds linking those who seek birth with those who have achieved it. It would seem to be precisely in the latter respect—representing not simply an account of diverse religious practices, but a religious practice in its own right—that *ōjōden* came to clash with later developments in Pure Land doctrine. Insofar as Hōnen was understood to reject all practices other than the *nembutsu,* and Shinran to reject self-motivated *(jiriki)* practice altogether—seeing even the *nembutsu* as a product of Amida's grace rather than as a means to establish *ōjō* for oneself—the karmic function of *ōjōden* became superfluous, even intolerable, and along with it, one of the central motivations for the compilation of birth narratives.[47] Of course, that is not to say that narrative traditions disappeared entirely within Japanese Pure Land discourse. Indeed, it may be possible to better understand the subsequent history of Pure Land narrative—including hagiographies of compassionate founding figures such as Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyō, as well as such later biographical collections as the

myōkōninden—by considering the continuing legacy and adaptation of the conventions and purposes of *ōjōden* within these later genres.

Ultimately, a consideration of the changing place and function of tale literature within the Pure Land tradition must come to grips with the fact that the scriptural cornerstone of the tradition is itself a form of hagiography. At their heart, the *Larger* and *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtras* both revolve around the story of the bodhisattva Dharmākara, whose spiritual perfection as the Buddha Amida was expressed in a series of vows that established both his "Land of Utmost Bliss" and the conditions for sentient beings to be born there. Indeed, it is none other than the Buddha Śākyamuni himself who appears as the teller of the tale, a narrative that is itself framed with the canonical introduction, "Thus have I heard." In this respect, the history of Buddhist narrative must finally take into account, not simply the role of popular tale literature but its interactions with all other forms of narrative within the tradition, canonical and extracanonical alike.

Notes

1 Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen, "Narrative, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life: Some Evidence from Theravāda Buddhism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24 no. 2 (1996): 309–10.

2 Charles Prebish, "Text and Tradition in the Study of Buddhist Ethics," *Pacific World* n.s. 9 (1993): 49–68.

3 Examples of this approach to Buddhist narrative traditions include John S. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Steven Heine, *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text: Philosophy and Folklore in the Fox Kōan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); and Michael R.Bathgate, *The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Folklore: Shapeshifters, Transformations, and Duplicities* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

4 The Japanese term *ōjōden* is in fact drawn directly from the Chinese designation for these texts, pronounced *wangshengzhuan*. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, the compilation of *ōjōden* saw a resurgence, the result of a complex confluence of factors, the examination of which must unfortunately lie beyond the purview of the current discussion.

5 Frederic J.Kotas, "Ōjōden: Accounts of Rebirth in the Pure Land" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1987), 68.

6 Both figures were associated with the *kangakue*, a literary and religious society at the capital, and the *nijūgozanmaie,* a group of like-minded Pure Land practitioners formed at Mt. Hiei. As Kotas notes, the *Ōjōyōshū* makes explicit reference to Yasutane's tale collection, and Genshin is said to have given a copy of the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* along with his own treatise to a Chinese merchant bound for home (ibid., 69).

7 Like others of his day, Yasutane's understanding of the role of literature in the Buddhist pursuit of salvation drew heavily on the thought of the Chinese poet Bo Juyi (Japanese: *Hakurakuten*), who defended literary pursuits as "floating phrases and fictive utterances" *(kyōgen kigo)* expediently placed in the service of the *Dharma*—see William R.LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1983).

8 In tracing Yasutane's religious and literary career, Kotas suggests a somewhat ambivalent and changing sense of the value of such phrases and utterances. The *kangakue*—to which the layman Yasutane belonged during the period in which he wrote the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*—was modeled on a similar society formed by Bo himself (Kotas, *"Ōjōden,"* 62). After leaving lay life and taking the religious name Jakushin, however, he wrote more than once of

the vanity of poetry, suggesting a repudiation of literary pursuits (ibid., 74–5). Nevertheless, such sentiments did not prevent him from returning to his earlier *ōjōden* collection in order to add entries—see Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke (eds), *Ōjōden, Hokke genki* (Nihon shisō taikei 7, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 502. Hereafter rendered NST 7.

8 NST 7:500.

9 NST 7:587.

10 Janet R.Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

11 Hallisey and Hansen, "Narrative, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life," 307. That is not to say, however, that *ōjōden* are not valuable historical documents. See especially Whalen Lai, "Legends of Births and the Pure Land Tradition in China," in James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K.Payne (eds), *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), 173–232; Christoph Kleine, "Portraits of Pious Women in East Asian Buddhist Hagiography: A Study of Accounts of Women who Attained Birth in Amida's Pure Land," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 85 (1998): 325–61; and Jacqueline I.Stone, "By the Power of One's Last Nenbutsu: Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan," in Richard K.Payne and Kenneth K.Tanaka (eds), *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 88–108.

12 Kleine, "Portraits of Pious Women," 329–30; Lai, "Legends of Births," 181; Kotas, "Ōjōden," 224–9.

13 On the quality of one's last moments as a sign of the next life, see Stone, "By the Power of One's Last Nenbutsu," 93.

14 As Stone notes, these images were often strongly reminiscent of Pure Land ritual and iconography, including not only the growing genre of *raigō* painting but also the ritual procession of the *mukaekō* (ibid., 82–3).

15 NST 7:507–8.

16 *Ōjōden* are now typically examined within the context of *setsuwa bungaku,* Buddhist didactic literature composed between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries. As Kotas argues, however, this classification—in part a response to the failure of these texts to stand up to the standards expected of biographical records—has itself supported an anachronistic view of *ōjōden* as the impoverished precursors of a later narrative genre (*"Ōjōden,"* 289–313). Insofar as current classifications have failed to present "an entirely satisfactory definition" of these texts (ibid., 313), it seems appropriate to return to the justifications their authors provided for these tales, an approach to which this chapter is intended as a contribution.

17 Ibid., 32, 34. See also 254. In a similar fashion, Stone describes *ōjōden* as promulgating "images of exemplary deaths," complementing manuals of deathbed ritual like the *Ōjōyōshū* ("By the Power of One's Last Nenbutsu," 88).

18 NST 7:506.

19 Paul Ricoeur, "The Narrative Function," in John B.Thompson, ed., *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 294.

20 John Stratton Hawley (ed.), *Saints and Virtues* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1987), xiii. See also Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 93.

21 Cf. Bathgate, *The Fox's Craft,* 40.

22 NST 7:500.

23 *Ōjōyōshū* 300–1. Cited in Allan A.Andrews, *The Teachings Essential for Rebirth: A Study of Genshin's* Ōjōyōshū (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1973), 83.

24 Kotas, *"Ōjōden,"* 300.

25 NST 7:508.

26 On “the tension between imitability and inimitability” at the heart of sacred biography see Robert L.Cohn, “Sainthood,” in Mircea Eliade *et al.* (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 13, 1.
27 The accounts of Shōtoku and Gyōgi were added as the first and second stories of the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki,* followed by a note explaining their inclusion by Yasutane.
28 This detail originated in a historical account recorded in the eighth-century *Nihon shoki*. The association of Shōtoku with Pure Land doctrine appears to be anachronistic, given what is currently understood regarding the Japanese history of its transmission. See Shigematsu Akihisa, “An Overview of Japanese Pure Land,” in James Foard *et al.* (eds), *The Pure Land Tradition,* 269–70.
29 Shōtoku is explicitly identified in the text as a manifestation *(keshin)* of the bodhisattva Kuze (Kannon), and Gyōgi as the bodhisattva Monju (Sanskrit: Mañjuśrī). Kūya is not explicitly identified as the manifestation of a particular bodhisattva, although Yasutane describes his *ōjō* as the return of a bodhisattva to the Pure Land (NST 7:508). Nor is Yasutane the only one to include such tales; Tameyasu’s *Shūt ōjōden,* for example, includes the tale of Gensan, whose marvelous birth, life (supported by miraculous interventions) and death (like Śākyamuni’s own, he is said to have simply exhausted his worldly karma) suggest a figure of more interest as a saintly promulgator of Buddhism than as a paradigm to be emulated (NST 7:595–6).
30 NST 7:503.
31 NST 7:577–8.
32 Titles of *ōjōden* collections are roughly evenly divided between those that present their tales as specifically Japanese tales—including either the term Nihon (“Japan”) or Honchō (“Our Country”)—and those that present themselves as sequels to the former collections.
33 Jacques LeGoff, “The Time of the *Exemplum* (Thirteenth Century),” in *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 80.
34 NST 7:619–20.
35 In this, *ōjōden* share a number of elements with the karmic discourses of *setsuwa bungaku* more generally—see Yoshiko K.Dykstra, “The Japanese Setsuwa and Indian Avadāda,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 6 (1979): 3–19
36 NST 7:620.
37 NST 7:504. This dream of Sukhāvatī is not the only form of mystical transport with which the monk Chikō is associated. In the story of Gyōgi, as well, he appears as a critic of the popular religious figure, until he is temporarily transported to hell for a taste of what his jealousy would earn him (but not before receiving a glimpse of the golden palace set aside for his rival). Properly chastised, he returned to the human world and became one of Gyōgi’s staunchest supporters.
38 NST 7:509.
39 NST 7:503. It was likely to avoid a similar fate that the high-ranking priest Saigen made sure to return a measure of rice he borrowed from the Yakushi Temple when his own death seemed imminent (NST 7:504).
40 See Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last Nenbutsu,” 80.
41 Cf. ibid., 89. On the role of *zenchishiki* in such manuals, see ibid., 81–2.
42 NST 7:500.
43 NST 7:578–9. Stone suggests that the spread of Pure Land devotion was likely facilitated by the patronage of warriors like the Minamoto, who would have experienced a close affinity to the *akunin* of *ōjō* narratives (“By the Power of One’s Last Nenbutsu,” 96–9).
44 The author of the *Sange ōjōki* had taken his retirement and was living under the monastic name Renzen when he compiled his collection, but like the authors of other Heian *ōjōden,* he had done so after a life of service at court (Kotas, *“Ōjōden”* 195).
45 Kotas, *“Ōjōden,”* 199–201.

46 Kasahara Kazuo, "The Characteristics of Kamakura Buddhism," in *A History of Japanese Religion* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 2001), 160–2. Responding to an earlier iteration of Kasahara's argument, Kotas noted that such a characterization "leaves many—if not most—questions unanswered" (Kotas, *"Ōjōden,"* 198).

47 The secondary literature on the teachings of Hōnen and Shinran in this regard is beyond the capacity of a short chapter to enumerate. A brief introduction may be found in Shigematsu, "An Overview of Japanese Pure Land," 296–307.

6
THE *KŪṬADANTA SUTTA*

Tradition in tension

Mavis L.Fenn

In *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka,* George Bond discusses four major responses to the challenge presented by the loss of Buddhist tradition and identity during the colonial period in Sri Lanka and through the rapid pace of modernity. While the four representations of the tradition vary, they have common concerns and issues:

> [A] strong appeal to the Buddhist scriptures for authority; the rationalization of all or part of the Buddhist symbol system; an emphasis on the role of the laity and on universalism; a world-affirming or at least world-accommodating bent; and an emphasis on pragmatic achievement.[1]

This emphasis on textual authority was influenced by the importance of "the book" in Western religious traditions.[2] Hence, it is fairly safe to assert that the appeal to textual authority is important to a large number of Buddhist practitioners, both Asian Buddhists and those Westerners who have adopted Buddhism.

So, too, Buddhism in Asia and the West must confront the challenges of the rapid change of modernity. While religious traditions consider their truths to be eternal, every tradition must provide an interpretation of those truths that resonates with the concerns of modern life. Symbols that were primary for a tradition at one point in history become secondary at another.[3]

One of the reformations of Buddhism in Asia has been the increased participation of the laity. Buddhism in the United States has always been lay centered. It is generally accepted that America has not generally been supportive of monasticism.[4] Another reformation in the Buddhist tradition comes from the encounter of Buddhism with Western religious emphasis on "good works." This has resulted in the creation of "engaged" Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism shows a concern for social issues and seeks practical results to those problems.[5]

This chapter is concerned with that appeal to Buddhist scripture and its representation in ways that affirm "engaged Buddhism" as an important part of the laity's spiritual path.[6] I will proceed by providing a "close reading" of *The Kūṭadanta Sutta*, an early Buddhist text that contains themes referring both to socio-political concerns and to renunciation. I believe that an analysis of this text will reveal a tension between those themes. This tension is analyzed within the context of the nature of aural and oral/written literature. I am concerned with what we can learn from the literary structure of the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*; specifically, the relationship between its frame tale and embedded

story.[7] The frame tale is a purported discussion between the Buddha and the brahman Kūṭadanta on the nature of sacrifice. The embedded tale is concerned with socio-political matters: employment and fair wages, just taxation and prosperity in the realm as a means to peace, and the obligation of the ruler in these matters. It is my contention that while there is a clear attempt to subordinate the socio-political message of the embedded tale to that of frame tale (which leads one to the inevitable conclusion that the best sacrifice is renunciation) the text may also be legitimately read, understood, and acted upon by those whose "agenda" is socio-political. In short, the text legitimates engaged Buddhism.

Both the frame and the embedded narratives come to us on the highest authority. Regarding the embedded tale, it is narrated by the Buddha and concerns an experience in which the Buddha participated directly in a former life. Thus it meets two of the basic criteria of the Buddhist tradition concerning legitimation and authority: it is the word of the Buddha *(buddkavacana)* and confirmed by his direct experience.[8] The frame tale concerns personal liberation and deals with the question of how one chooses the most appropriate means to secure happiness and benefit for a long time *(dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāyāti)*.[9] It is also placed in the mouth of the Buddha. At first blush, then, the two stories appear to carry an equal claim to authority and, by extension, it would appear that the socio-political aspects of the text are equally valid and should be given equal weight in Buddhist teachings and practice. The literary structure of the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*, however, bears evidence of an attempt to subordinate the embedded text (sociopolitical) to the frame tale (personal liberation) through the literary device of "framing."[10] The embedded story is virtually self-contained. The one caveat is that the matter is not as clear as initially presented in the text and there are narrative problems that prevent immediate decision. This will receive further discussion in the section regarding the problems inherent in dealing with early Buddhist literature.

Embedded tale: the story of King Mahāvijita

The story runs from verse 10 to verse 20 and comprises one-third of the *sutta*. The story is situated in the past and narrated by the Buddha. It provides an answer to the question of how he can successfully perform the sacrifice in three modes with its accessories of sixteen kinds.[11] This said, however, the answer to the question (the embedded story) is virtually self-contained. There is no explicit reference to Kūṭadanta, his friends, or any other audience members. There are also no "asides" by the narrator to explicitly indicate that Kūṭadanta or anyone else present including the narrator bears any similarity to any of the characters in the story.

There are two major characters: King Mahāvijita and his religious advisor. The king is described as rich, pure in terms of lineage, handsome, militarily powerful, faithful and generous to the poor (both religious mendicants and the "ordinary" poor), a doer of good deeds, learned, intelligent and able to think out matters past, present, and future. These eight qualities are said to be the "implements" of the sacrifice he wishes to perform.[12] The other major character is the king's religious advisor. His personal qualities, like the king's, are numerous and somewhat parallel to those of the king. The advisor is described

as pure in lineage, knowledgeable in the *Vedas,* ritual, phonology, grammar, oral tradition, nature, science, and the bodily marks of a great man. He is also virtuous, wise, intelligent, and first or second among those who take up the sacrificial ladle.[13] These qualities are also stated to be implements used in the sacrifice.

There are four primary minor characters who are not named but who are identified as representatives of the four classes of people who make up the king's realm. They are all wealthy and their communal consent makes them instruments of the sacrifice as well.[14] They support the king and follow his example. The remaining minor characters are those individuals who volunteer their labor for the sacrifice and those who attend and benefit from the sacrifice. They are described as those who keep the ten moral rules and those who don't.[15]

Events unfold as follows: The king is contemplating his wealth, which is extensive, and his power, which covers the whole earth. He muses, "What if I offer a great sacrifice for my benefit and happiness for many days?" *(Yan nūnāhaṃ mahāyaññam yajeyyaṃ yaṃ mama assa dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāyāti).*[16] He approaches the advisor, states his intent, and asks for instruction in securing benefit and happiness for a long time. The advisor begins, not with specific instructions regarding proper sacrificial performance but with a statement regarding the condition of the kingdom. The realm is overrun with robbers who make the roads unsafe and harass the villages and towns. Punishments such as tax increases, banishment and blame, confiscation of property, or flogging will not end the problem. You simply cannot catch everyone who violates the rules. There are, however, the advisor states, ways to put a thorough and appropriate end to the problem. The king should give cattle and seed corn to those who wish to farm, capital grants to business- and tradespeople, fair wages and conditions for government workers. This will end the problem of disorder. Everyone will be busy with their business, tax revenue will go up, and relationships between people will be peaceful and happy. Indeed, they will dance with their children in the streets and never lock their doors.[17] In summary then, the advisor suggests that the sacrifice, or at least its preliminaries, consists in a series of measures designed to rid the realm of lawlessness and disorder through a wide variety of job-creation programs, just taxation, and fair wages and benefits for government workers.

The king does as instructed and the stated results follow. He returns to the advisor and repeats his desire to offer a large sacrifice, seeking instruction on how to secure benefit and happiness for many days. The king is instructed to secure the consent of the four social groups for the sacrifice and to invite them to attend. He is also to ensure that all participation in the sacrifice is voluntary, that nothing living be destroyed and that all the elements of the sacrifice should be nourishing to human life.[18]

Just prior to the sacrifice, the advisor instructs the king on the three modes of its performance, in this case the mental attitude the king should adopt when performing the sacrifice. There should be no regret for the wealth expended before, during, or after the sacrifice. The king should have no remorse concerning the presence of evil people but rejoice in the presence of good people and the benefit they will receive from the sacrifice.[19] As the king performs the sacrifice, the advisor instructs him to gladden his heart in sixteen ways: he has invited the four classes of his subjects, he has the eight qualities required for offering sacrifice, and he is assisted by an advisor who has the four necessary qualities. Everything is complete. He can sacrifice and have a happy heart.[20]

The description of the sacrifice itself is quite limited. It is simply noted that no living creatures were destroyed, no trees or grasses were destroyed and all labor was voluntary. The list of ingredients is ghee, oil, butter, milk, honey, and sugar. The representatives of the four social groups, inspired by the king's sacrifice, offer their money to him for sacrifice. He refuses on the grounds that he has acquired sufficient wealth through just taxation. In fact, he offers to give them more money than they already have. After a brief conference in which they decide that it would be unseemly to return home with wealth intact, they join together with the populace and offer their wealth in an after-sacrifice that consists in establishing donation centers—the giving of gifts—throughout the kingdom.[21] The concluding verse sums up the entire proceedings: there was fourfold cooperation, the king had the eight personal gifts, his advisor the four, and there were three modes of sacrifice. The Buddha, having completed the story, states: "This, Brahman, is said to be successful sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements" *(Ayaṃ vuccati brāhmaṇa tividhā yañña-sampadā soḷasa-parikkhārāti)*.[22]

A full interpretation of the Mahāvijita sacrifice story is beyond the scope of this chapter. The focus of the analysis is the primary narrative element of the story that calls attention to the issue at hand, the relationship between the embedded story (Mahāvijita) and the frame tale (Kūṭadanta). Rhys Davids has noted the role of word play and irony in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* as an aid to transforming the brahmanical notion of sacrifice into the Buddhist notion of ethical action and inner attitude.[23] What has not been commented on before is that the narrative flow in the Mahāvijita story is not from outer ritual to inner attitude but from the personal and individual to the public and communal. The king's intention is to perform a sacrifice that will benefit him personally: each question concerns how he can benefit and be happy for many days. While his questions are individual and personal, the advisor's answers are always public and communal. Preparing the sacred site becomes establishing a peaceful realm. The sacrificial implements consist in a wise and virtuous king and advisor acting together with the consent of the people in non-violent ways that will benefit the entire population both directly, in the establishment of law and order and the distribution of goods, and indirectly in their influence on all citizens to emulate the model of the king. This creates a society marked by generosity, non-violence, and mutual reciprocity. The point of the sacrifice has been transformed from providing benefit and happiness to one king to benefiting all citizens of the realm, human, animal, and the natural world.

The connection between sacrifice *(yañña)* and giving *(dāna)* is made explicitly once in the story: in verse 20 where the citizens, their wealth declined by the king in the previous verse, establish gift-giving areas in geographic relation to the king's sacrificial pit. Individual religious action has been transformed into communal socio-political action within a religious framework. Thus, social engagement becomes religious practice. As the story is placed in the mouth of the Buddha, the transitional line, "This, Brahman, is said to be successful sacrifice," constitutes strong evidence that the embedded story states the canonical, if not the Buddha's, view on polity and social order. I turn now to the frame tale, the story of Kūṭadanta.

Frame tale: Kūṭadanta

The first section of the frame tale runs from verses 1 to 9; the second from verses 22 to 30. It comprises almost two-thirds of the *sutta*. Events occur at two locations, Kūṭadanta's home and the Ambalatthika Park where the Buddha and about 500 monks have stopped over while on tour. The narrative flow in the first section is from Kūṭadanta's home to the park, in the second from the park to Kūṭadanta's home.

There are two major characters, the Buddha and Kūṭadanta Kūṭadanta. is described as being a Brahman householder. He lives on land given to him by King Bimbisāra, land over which he has full control as if he were a king. We assume he is wealthy as the numbers of animals listed for sacrifice is 500. He is prominent, well respected, and has many friends. His sole interest throughout the text is sacrifice: the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements in the first section, and alternate kinds of sacrifice in the second. He is portrayed as independent and open-minded: he consults the non-brahman Buddha against the advice of his friends. He values the religious life over that of a householder.[24] Finally, there are two examples in section two that demonstrate his ability for insight and deep understanding.

The other major character is the Buddha. He is described as knowledgeable about the sacrifice in three modes with its sixteen instruments and his credentials are also established by the traditional listing of his superiority in every area of life culminating in his Buddhahood. The minor characters include other brahmans who have assembled for Kūṭadanta's sacrifice. These friends accompany him to see the Buddha and form part of the audience along with the monks and others. Kūṭadanta's friends are initially portrayed as haughty and skeptical.

Events are as follows: Kūṭadanta wishes to perform a major sacrifice. He goes to see the Buddha as he has heard that the Buddha is an expert in a complicated sacrifice with three modes and sixteen instruments. He asks the Buddha for instruction and is told the story of King Mahāvijita. His friends are overwhelmed with the story but Kūṭadanta remains silent. The reason he gives for being quiet is that the Buddha has given no origin for the story and so must be speaking from personal experience. In response to his question, the Buddha states that he was the advisor, and performance of this sacrifice as described in the story does, indeed, lead to heaven after death.[25]

The second section opens with verse 22 which sets the tone. Again, it begins with a question from Kūṭadanta. He wants to know if there is a sacrifice that is less difficult and troublesome (*appaṭṭhataro ca appasamārabbhataro*) but provides greater benefit *(mahapphalataro)*. The Buddha replies that perpetual gifts to virtuous recluses are better. The reason for this is that the most virtuous recluses are the *arahants* and they will not attend the complicated sacrifices. Verses 24–28 consist in a question-and-answer sequence in which Kūṭadanta repeatedly asks about less difficult and more beneficial sacrifices. The Buddha's responses are: building a dwelling for the order; taking the refuges; undertaking the Five Precepts; finally a long section from the *Sāmaññaphala*

Sutta beginning with the arising of a Buddha, moving through the moralities, five hindrances, four meditations, insight arising from knowledge, destruction of lust, hatred and delusion, culminating in liberation which is the highest and sweetest sacrifice.[26]

Verse 28 ends the direct dialogue between the two major characters and the external narrator finishes the story. Kūṭadanta responds enthusiastically to the discourse with the standard speech indicating understanding, a request to take the refuges, and a vow to release the sacrificial animals (now listed at 3500).[27] The external narrator informs us that the Buddha then delivered a progressive discourse beginning with giving and morality and culminating with the Four Noble Truths and the path to liberation. It is clear that Kūṭadanta has understood the discourse as he obtains the eye of truth *(dhammacakka),* the knowledge that whatever arises ceases.

The last verse consists in two parts. In the first, the narrator explains that Kūṭadanta no longer needs anyone to explain the Buddha's teaching to him because he has attained a deep understanding of the truth. Kūṭadanta then invites the Buddha and monks to dinner the next day. The final section describes the Buddha's arrival at the sacrificial pit where he is fed by Kūṭadanta himself. The Buddha leaves after giving a religious discourse that Kūṭadanta finds inspiring. This completes both the frame tale and the *sutta* itself.

As with the embedded story, my analysis will focus on those elements of the frame story that pertain to the relationship between the two. The first thing of note is the situational flow. The overall flow when the two sections of the frame tale are taken together is from home to the homeless realm (Kūṭadanta goes to see the Buddha) and back again (Buddha goes to dinner). The second section is propelled by the question-and-answer sequence whose flow is stated to be from things of greater difficulty to those of lesser difficulty and from things with lesser fruit to those of greater fruit. The flow from lesser to greater fruit appears to be maintained as liberation is the ultimate fruit. However, the flow from things of greater to those of lesser difficulty lasts only a few verses. One can conceivably argue that religious giving of the necessaries of life and buildings is easier than the major sacrifice, and taking the refuges is not noticeably more difficult than such religious giving. However, taking up the Five Precepts is more difficult because it requires commitment, willingness to change, and constant vigilance. And by no stretch of the imagination can the disciplined practice of a renouncer described in verse 27 be considered easier than any of the previously mentioned practices.

There is another problem with the narrative flow in section two. The question-and-answer sequence sets up an ascending pattern that the reader links to Kūṭadanta's growing religious understanding. Because he continues to question, we assume that he understands what he is told and wants to learn more. Twice in this section our belief that Kūṭadanta is growing in wisdom is reinforced: his responses to the Buddha's statement that taking up the religious life is the highest sacrifice, and to the progressive discourse. We expect that Kūṭadanta's growing knowledge will culminate in a request for ordination. Twice the ascending scale does not climax and the invitation to dinner is quite anticlimactic. Of the two narrative failures to climax the second is the more problematic as the narrator indicates that Kūṭadanta has understood the Four Noble Truths and the

path to the cessation of suffering. Kūṭadanta's failure to seek ordination is emphasized by the narrative breaks but it is never explained.

Relating the frame tale and embedded tale

An initial reading of the entire *sutta* indicates that the socio-political message of the Mahāvijita story is subordinated to the Kūṭadanta story that extols the religious life. Verse 22 is crucial and powerful. Kūṭadanta's question regarding easier and more beneficial sacrifices colors our understanding, not just of what is to come in the story but of what has gone before. The story of King Mahāvijita is important because it is narrated by the Buddha but what is to come, the discourse on alternate sacrifices, is more important because the Buddha states that it is less difficult and provides more benefit. This impression is strengthened when we note that the Buddha's answers regarding giving, donating, the refuges, and the precepts are general and brief. The response dealing with taking up the religious life is long, detailed, and weighty. This leaves the reader with the impression that if Kūṭadanta is really serious about his welfare and happiness he will seek ordination because it is the only sacrifice that counts. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the movement from personal and individual acts to public and communal acts noted in the Mahāvijita story is reversed in the question-and-answer sequence with Kūṭadanta. The narrative flow there is from external sacrifices to internal acts such as meditation. Before we conclude that the socio-political message of the text is subordinated by its religious message, there are other factors to be considered. When these factors are examined the case for subordination is less clear, or at least less successful.

The entire *sutta* is about sacrifice and it discusses several types of sacrifice. The two broad categories of sacrifice are Brahmanical versus Buddhist. Within the Buddhist category we are offered large public and communal giving, individual types of giving, ethical giving, conversion, and renunciation. Combined with the situational flow of the entire *sutta*, from home to homeless and back again, the question arises as to whether or not Kūṭadanta is expected to renounce or whether he is being presented with a variety of ways by which an individual can secure his or her benefit for many days. We are twice led to expect a climax that does not come and the invitation and meal section is profoundly anticlimactic. We are left with the frustrating question, "Why didn't Kūṭadanta seek ordination?" Perhaps he was not meant to?

The choppy narrative flow after verse 27 disrupts the apparent intent to set up a reversal of the pattern of action found in the *Mahāvijita* story and supports the view that Kūṭadanta was not expected to embrace renunciation. There are also several direct connections made between the Mahāvijita story and the Kūṭadanta story that weaken the thrust of the subordination elements and make Kūṭadanta's return home understandable. There is a connection between King Mahāvijita and Kūṭadanta. Kūṭadanta is described as living on land over which he has full rights "as if he were a king."[28] There is another connection between the Mahāvijita and Kūṭadanta stories.

Kūṭadanta is, like the representatives of the four classes of the king's subjects, an influential and wealthy man who should, by analogy, follow their example.

The frame story ends with Kūṭadanta feeding the Buddha on the sacrificial site, symbolically connecting giving and sacrifice in the frame tale as in the embedded story. The Kūṭadanta who feeds the Buddha at the end of the story is a transformed man who has heard and understood the truth. His return to the householder's life after attaining religious knowledge implies that he has made a choice. This implies further that, while the life of renunciation is the highest life, it is not the only legitimate choice for those seeking liberation. While the embedded story is self-contained, it begins immediately after Kūṭadanta's question about the sacrifice. The transition statement that marks the end of the story is spoken by the Buddha to Kūṭadanta: "This, Brahman, is said to be successful sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements."[29] Thus, the story is the Buddha's answer to Kūṭadanta's question.

The framing of the socio-political material within a religious framework can cut both ways. On the one hand, it appears to imply that one of the things we must do in order to attain liberation is help create a society based upon reciprocity, non-violence, and so on. On the other hand, although it is not the only choice presented, extolling the religious life as the highest life, the one that produces the most benefit, seems to subordinate the impact of the socio-political sections. As the Buddha has endorsed both views there is no final arbiter between them if, indeed, there is meant to be.

Exploring this matter further, we need to examine verse 22, the crucial verse that links the embedded story and the frame tale. Having been assured in verse 21 that if he sacrifices in the manner outlined in the Mahāvijita story he will attain heaven after death, in verse 22 Kūṭadanta asks if there is a sacrifice that is less difficult but produces more benefit. This question is different in kind from the first question Kūṭadanta asked. The first question was personal and specific, asked by a prosperous householder about a specific sacrifice to be performed for his personal benefit. We may presume that the Mahāvijita story is tailored to fit that question. In short, the Buddha approaches the matter from Kūṭadanta's perspective. The second question is a general one about sacrifice and is posed only after Kūṭadanta has received an answer to the first question. Kūṭadanta has asked the Buddha's opinion and he receives it. The answer to the general question is from the Buddha's perspective, that of a man who has already attained the ultimate goal. Thus, it is retrospective. From this retrospective viewpoint renunciation is the least difficult and most beneficial sacrifice.

If my assumption is correct, that the Buddha's response to the questions posed by Kūṭadanta is from two different perspectives reflecting the spiritual aspirations and attainments of different sorts of people (Buddhas and the rest of us), then we are able to deal with the main problem in the second section of the frame tale: why doesn't Kūṭadanta seek ordination? While Kūṭadanta has understood everything the Buddha said about the religious life, he is not ready for it yet. That he will be is foreshadowed in the Buddha's statement that he was the advisor in the Mahāvijita story. If it took the Buddha several lifetimes after this to become a Buddha, surely it will take Kūṭadanta a few lifetimes. But his question has been answered and he has acted upon it. He has made

the connection between sacrifice and giving and ensures his benefit for many days by feeding the Buddha and the monks. The Buddha makes no comment on Kūṭadanta's choice, implying consent.

Conclusion

The structure of the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* bears evidence of an attempt to subordinate the socio-political embedded text to that of the personal liberation frame tale. Read sequentially, it divides into two sections, the second section opening with a statement that what is to follow is less difficult and provides more benefit. An examination of several narrative elements of the text—perspective, unfulfilled expectations and unanswered questions, foreshadowing, narrative and situational flow—has thrown this supposition into question. If there was such an attempt, not an unreasonable supposition about a collection of texts generally believed to be compiled by and largely for a monastic community, it is largely unsuccessful. By exposing the two points of view that coexist within the text, analysis demonstrates that the text can be legitimately read, understood, and acted upon by two groups of individuals, those seeking benefit for many days and those seeking liberation in this life. Narrative analysis has recovered the embedded story without glossing over the obvious tension that exists between the two perspectives. This tension is profound and runs throughout early Buddhist narratives. Any analysis that fails to do justice to either element runs the risk of being simplistic or narrowly ideological.

It is important to remember that before being committed to writing the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* was an aural text. Aural texts rely heavily on the storyteller's emphasis and the listening community's knowledge of aural techniques, allusions, and stock types. Aural literature is full of repetition, stories within stories, and segmentation. The hearer knows where to place stops and starts from the storyteller's emphasis. The storyteller varies the story and emphasizes different aspects of it according to the audience and the points he or she wishes to make. Kirin Narayan has written an excellent study of a modern Indian *guru* who varied both stories and emphasis according to the audience and the occasion that called forth the story.[30] Often audience members were drawn into the story or its emphasis shifted or a different moral was drawn from the tale. The audience believed that the *guru* told stories in order to teach them, gently, about the way of the world and the wonders of God.

Some, if not all, the flexibility of an aural text is lost when any particular version is committed to paper. Comparing versions can aid in restoring some of that flexibility. By exposing various tensions and ambiguities in the text narrative analysis can also restore some of that flexibility. Modern Buddhists can legitimately foreground previously backgrounded material, in this case socio-political matters, without denying or attempting to subordinate the other equally compelling message, or denying its historic predominance in doctrinal interpretations. As was the case when only aural narratives existed, the text can remain living, sensitive to the needs of its audience. This enhances its ability to fulfill its original end, a tale meant to instruct humans in means to deal with the fundamental question regarding our existence, the question of suffering.

Notes

1 George Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 6.

2 Gregory Schopen, "Archeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Buddhism," in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 1–15.

3 Theodore Ludwig, *The Sacred Paths of the East* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 7.

4 Paul Numrich discusses this within the context of the difficulties for Theravāda Buddhism in establishing an indigenous *sangha* in the United States. Paul Numrich, "Theravada Buddhism in America: Prospects for the Sangha," in *The Faces of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998), 150.

5 Christopher Queen, "Introduction: A New Buddhism," in *Engaged Buddhism in sthe West* (Somerville, Mass.: Wisdom, 2000), 1–31.

6 While this analysis does deal with textual interpretation in a modern context, I do not consider it to be an exercise in what has recently been termed "Buddhist theology." My approach to the text is a non-Buddhist and literary one. For more on Buddhist theology see Roger Jackson and John Makransky (eds), *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000).

7 As noted in a previous article, I realize that *suttas* may have been constructed through combining two separate *suttas*. My assumption is that this combination is not random. M.Fenn, "Two Notions of Poverty in the Pāli Canon," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3, 1996.

8 For a discussion on *buddhavacana* see Graeme MacQueen, "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism I," *Religion* 11 (1981): 303–319; Graeme MacQueen, "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism II," *Religion* 12 (1982): 49–65.

9 "*Kūṭadanta Sutta*", *The Digha Nikāya* vol. I, T.W.Rhys Davids and J.Estlin Carpenter (eds) (London: Pali Text Society, 1975), 137.

10 Framing is a literary device in which one story is embedded within another. The effect is that the embedded tale is understood in relation to the frame tale. In short, we interpret the embedded tale within the context of the issues raised in the frame tale.

11 "*Kūṭadanta Sutta*",s *Sacred Books of the Buddhists* vol. II (London: Pali Text Society), 180–186.

12 Ibid., 177–178.

13 Ibid., 178.

14 Ibid., 177, 180.

15 Ibid., 179.

16 Ibid., 134.

17 Ibid., 175–176.

18 Ibid., 180.

19 Ibid., 43.

20 Ibid., 179.

21 Ibid., 180.

22 Ibid., 143.

23 "*Kūṭadanta Sutta*", *The Digha Nikāya* vol. I, 161.

24 Kūṭadanta's friends try and dissuade him from going to see the Buddha. They argue that Kūṭadanta's status is higher than the Buddha's and so the Buddha should come to him. "*Kūṭadanta Sutta*", *Sacred Books of the Buddhists* vol. II, 174.

25 Ibid., 181.

26 Ibid., 183.

27 Ibid., 184.

28 Ibid., 173.

29 Ibid., 181.

30 Kirin Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Philadelphia Press, 1989).

7
MI-PHAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO YOGACĀRA[1]

Leslie Kawamura

It is well known that within Mahāyāna Buddhism, the ideas introduced and expounded by the three savants—Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu—provided the basis for the development of the movement known as the Yogācāra in India. However, there is still uncertainty as to its status, especially as to whether it should be understood as a school separate from the Madhyamaka founded by Nāgārjuna or whether it should be understood as an extension of it. Further, there is the question of whether the mentalistic inclinations that sustain this school should be understood as substantively real *(vastutas)* or whether they should be understood as a continuum but without self-nature *(niḥsvabhāva)* that is, as openness *(śunyatā)*.[2]

The present chapter will not address, these questions, but rather will assume that the Yogācāra tradition developed in India around the fourth or fifth centuries CE and that it was systematized according to the three basic tenets or theories of the eight cognitive operations *(vijñāna)*, three constitutive principles of reality *(tri-svabhāva or tri-lakṣaṇa)*, and the path theory *(mārga)*. If we can understand the structure of the Yogācāra tradition in that manner, then the cognition theory can be understood as developing a Mahāyāna abhidharmic stance, the three constitutive principles of reality, a philosophical or logical foundation, and the path, a soteriological or ritual practice. This chapter focuses on the second of these tenets, namely the three constitutive principles of reality.

The discussion in this chapter will be presented in three parts. First, there will be a general comment on the question of why it is worthwhile to return again to a discussion on the three constitutive principles of reality *(tri-svabhāva/tri-lakṣaṇa)*, especially in view of the fact that Åke Boquist has already written a scholarly presentation of it. Second, the three constitutive principles of reality are defined succinctly by Mi-pham in his commentary on the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra* found on pp. 238.2–239.2, and a study of his discussion on pp. 254.1–259–6 shows that the contents therein resemble Asaṅga's discussion of the three in Chapter II of his *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*; therefore, a short section is allocated to pointing this out. Third, in his discussion on Chapter VII of the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra*, Mi-pham makes some interesting comments on the distinction between the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra. This chapter therefore concludes with a translation of the section on pp. 94.1–101.2.

In her recent study of the three constitutive principles of reality or the three-nature theory, Åke Boquist states:

> Although already represented in the very earliest works, TSB *(trisvabhāva)* is found in Mvb *(Madhyāntambhāga)* and Msa *(Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra)* as well; this concept is surely one of the most complex and subtle outbursts of creative Buddhist thought and its soteriological value could not be underestimated. Briefly, TSB means that the neutral "reality," which is reduced to moments of causality labeled *dharma,* is the substrate out of which discursive thoughts arise, or metaphorically—on which our intellectualizations are projected. This world of eternal flux is called the dependent nature (DN) *(paratantrasvabhāva).* An unenlightened person projects his delusions, usually said to consist of the distinction between subject and object, on the relative nature and thereby an erroneous image of reality appears; because of this illusion he will remain in the bondage of *saṃsāra.* This deceptive perspective is called the imagined nature (IN) *(parikalpitasvabhāva)* and its cessation, that is, when reality is seen as it really is, is defined in different ways, leads to enlightenment and it is called the consummated nature (CN) *(pariniṣpannasvabhāva).*[3]

This is a very succinct yet comprehensive exposition of the three constitutive principles of reality which are discussed more extensively and in greater detail in the various Yogācāra texts.

Åke Boquist has given a detailed analysis of the three constitutive principles of reality—that is, the three-nature theory—according to the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra,* the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* the *Madhyāntavibhāga,* the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra,* the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha,* the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa,* and the *Triṃśika.* She has plotted how these three are discussed in each chapter of these texts and has given an analysis of each in the order and sequence in which they appear. She has also taken into consideration the various translations of the passages that are available to date. Consequently, in view of her work, there may seem to be no need for any further study of the use of these terms in the above texts.

Why should one try to present yet more work on the three-nature theory? This chapter is written in the hope of augmenting Boquist's work in view of the fact that she says her exposition "reflects a very simplified comprehension of the subject matter and does not take into account various approaches to controversial topics." This investigation into 'Jam mgon 'Ju, Mi-pham rnam rgyal's (1846–1912; hereafter Mi-pham) discussions on the three constitutive principles of reality in the Yogācāra, or the Buddhist Mentalistic Trend, is made in order to fill the gaps which Boquist claims to have left in her very extensive and lucid study on the topic.

Although Mi-pham was an outstanding scholar, his works have not received the attention that they deserve. However, fortunately, he is gradually becoming the focus of current Buddhist scholarly studies, of which John Whitney Pettit's recently published, outstanding and detailed study and translation of Mi-pham's work, *Beacon of Certainty—Illuminating,*[4] constitutes a good example. Mi-pham's discussions on the three constitutive principles of reality found in his commentaries on the

Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra[5] and on the *Mahāyānasaṃgraba*[6] are examined in this chapter. In regard to Mi-pham's commentary on the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra*, this chapter focuses mainly on his discussion of the three constitutive principles of reality on pp. 94.1–101.2.[7] The discussion on the three constitutive principles of reality falls within the context of the third major division of Mi-pham's discussion on the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra*, which essentially is his commentary on *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra* (MSA) Chapters VII, VIII, and IX. In Tibetan, the text division is as follows: gsum pa[8] bsam par by a ba la [93.6]

I rtogs bya de kho na nyid la bsam pa [93.6] [MSA Chapter VII]
II bsgrub bya mngon shes drug la bsam pa [110.5] [MSA Chapter VIII]
III yon tan thams cad thob pa'i rgyu rang rgyud yongs su smin par bya ba la bsam pa gsum [120.1] [MSA Chapter IX] las

Further, in commenting on Chapter VII, that is the first topic "reflecting on reality as-it-is that is to be experientially known" (rtogs bya de kho na nyid la bsam pa [93.6]), Mi-pham divided his discussion into the following three topics:

i de kho na nyid kyi mtshan nyid (the defining-characteristic of reality-as-it-is) [94.1]
ii de gtan la [94.1] bab pa bdag med gnyis (the two non-substantiality that constitutes it) [101.2]

a gang zag bdag med pa (non-substantiality of person) [101.3]
b chos bdag med pa (non-substantiality of the entities of reality) [103.5]

iii de ji ltar rtogs tshul gyi go rim gsum (and thirdly, the manner in which they are to be experienced) [107.1]

Here, we will focus mainly on Mi-pham's commentary on the first topic—the defining-characteristics of reality-as-it-is, but before this his discussion on Chapter XII, pp. 238.2–239.2 (for the Tibetan text see Appendix 1), will be presented, because the three constitutive principles of reality are defined succinctly in it. Mi-pham states:

> First, regarding the investigation into the reality as-it-is of the entities of reality *(chos kyi de kho na nyid)* there are two verses. The investigation into the reality-as-it-is of the afflictional and pure entities of reality should be understood from perspectives of the [three] constitutive principles of reality, namely the imagined, the other dependent, and the perfected. The appearance of the duality of subject and object *(grahya-grāhakābhāsa),* even though [reality] is devoid of the subject/object dichotomy, is the defining-characteristic of the imagined *(parikalpitalakṣaṇa)*.
>
> The other dependent *(paratantra)* is whatever serves as the basis or foundation for error—namely the appearance as [the subject/ object] dichotomy—even when the two—subject and object are non-existing. The perfected *(parinispanna)* is what is of the nature of not being able to express anything what-so-ever by words and thus is of the nature of not being fabricated by discrimination and it comprises the reality of the

modus operandi of all entities of reality. That is the self-sufficient knowledge *(pratyātma-vedanīya)* which is the very state of the inexpressible because it is free from the phenomenon of the [duality of] subject and object.

In the same manner, the defining-characteristic of the imagined should be known as non-existent just as the snake [imposed] upon a rope and the impure defining-characteristic of the other dependent must be abandoned, because the subject/object [dichotomy] that appears as if existing in the other dependent must be removed.

What is claimed as naturally freed of defilement, that is, the perfected, is freed of the adventitious defilements. That which is naturally freed from defilements, even though from the perspective of its ownnature, has been freed of impurities from the very beginning, just as the sky that is naturally pure, gold that is naturally pure, and water that is naturally clean, but like the sky by clouds, gold by mire, and water by soil, [one] becomes obstructed by adventitious defilements [one] will not be pure, therefore when one who is freed from negative emotions is acknowledged as pure.

Mi-pham gives a more detailed discussion on the three constitutive principles of reality in his commentary on Chapter XII (topic vi below: investigation into the *Dharma* pp. 211.4–314.4) that he divides into five parts as follows:

MSA XII Chos tshol gyi le'u bshad pa (Mi-pham's commentary: 211.4–314.4) 'di la

I btsal bar bya ba'i chos (211.4)
II yid la byed pa gang gis tshol ba (286.4)
III yongs su tshol ba'i bye brag (306.5)
IV chos tshol ba'i 'bras bu (308.4)
V don bsdu ba'i tshig bcad (313.6)

The first part consists two divisions as follows:

I btsal bar bya ba'i chos (211.4)

1 bshad bya lung gi chos btsal ba (211.5)
2 rtogs bya don gyi chos btsal ba (237.5)

The second division is divided further into eleven topics:

i de kho na nyid yongs su tshol ba—2 *kārakās* (238.2) [168a^{2}][9]
ii sgyu ma lta bur yongs su tshol ba—15 *kārakās* (239–5) [168a^{7}]
iii de bzhin du shes bya yongs tshol ba—1 *kārakā*=MV I.1 (249.5) [170b^{3}]
iv kun nyon dang rnam byang yongs tshol ba—2 *kārakās* (250.6) [170b$^{5–6}$]
v rnam par rig pa tsam yongs tshol ba—2 *kārakās* (252.5) [171a^{5}]
vi mtshan nyid yongs tshol ba—8 *kārakās* (254.1) [171b^{2}]
vii rnam par grol ba yongs tshol—9 *kārakās* (264.3) [173a^{3}]
viii ngo bo nyid med pa yongs tshol—2 *kārakās* (269–6) [174a^{3}]
ix mi skye ba'i chos la bjod pa yongs tshol—1 *kārakā* (272 .4) [174b^{1}]
x theg pa gcig tu bstan pa'i dgongs pa yongs tshol—7 *kārakās* (275.1) [174b^{5}]

xi rig pa'i gnas lnga yong su tshol ba (282.4) [176a⁴–176a⁶]

Of these, topic vi. explains "the investigation into the defining-characteristic of what is to be experienced," and it is evident that, contextually, although it is the three constitutive principles of reality that are being discussed here, the details involved in discussing the eleven topics correspond essentially to Chapter II of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* that explicates the three constitutive principles of reality. Thus, in examining topic vi. *mtshan nyid yongs tshol ba,* we find that in the interim of the ten leaves of Tibetan text,[10] Mi-pham has commented upon what can be taken as a summary of the contents of the second chapter of Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*. Mi-pham's own commentary on the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* does not appear in Sonam Topgay Kazi's *Collected Writings of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rGya-mtsho,* but is available from a collection of his work entitled *Expanded Redaction of the Complete Works of 'Ju Mi Pham,* printed in Bhutan and available in Nepal.[11] This work differs in style from his commentary on the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra* in that in commenting on the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, Mi-pham uses an inter-linear style: that is, he intersperses his own comments between the actual words found in the text—a style which he often uses to write commentaries.

It is in the second chapter—defining characteristics of what is to be known (*jñeya-lakṣaṇa*) of Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* that the three constitutive principles of reality (*tri-lakṣaṇa*) are discussed. The contents of the 32 sections are as follows:

- Section II.1[12] names the three constitutive principles of reality (*tri-lakṣaṇa*).
- Section II.2 defines paratantra as 11 kinds of informing-cognitions *(vijñapti)* that have the *ālayavijñāna* as their seed *(ālayavijñānabījaka)* and that are subsumed under erroneous discrimination (*abhūtaparikalpasaṃgṛhīta*).
- Section II.3 defines *parikalpitalakṣaṇa*.
- Section II.4 defines *pariniṣpannalakṣaṇa*.
- Section II.5 summarizes II.2.
- Section II.6–14b consists of a discussion on *Vijñaptimātra.*
- Section II.15 defines, once again, the *tri-lakṣaṇa* separately.
- Section II.16 focuses on *parikalpitalakṣaṇa* in terms of three aspects.
- Section II.17 discusses whether the *tri-lakṣaṇa* are the same or different.
- Section II.18 explains the *tri-lakṣaṇa* in view of their twofold nature.
- Section II.19 discusses *vikalpa* (discrimination) as four kinds and as five kinds.
- Section II.20 discusses the ten kinds of *vikalpa* (discrimination).
- Section II.21 discusses the ten kinds of *vikṣepa* (distraction).
- Section II.22 concludes the discussion of Sections II.20 and 21 and explains their antidotes (*pratipakṣa*).
- Section II.23 is a response to Section II.17 in view of *paryāya* (synonym).
- Section II.24 is also response to Section II.17 in view of *parāvṛtti* (transformation).
- Section II.25 is also a response to Section II.17 in view of *śūnyatā* (open possibility).

- Section II.26 gives the *Buddha-deśana* for the three natures (for example, *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*
- Section II.27 discusses *paratantra* in view of eight analogies.
- Section II.28 discusses the *trilakṣaṇa* from a yet deeper perspective in contrast to Section II.26 where each was explained according to the *sūtras*.
- Section II.29 discusses the three *lakṣaṇa* as discussed in view of *Abhidharma-mahāyāna Sūtra*.
- Section II.30 discusses the three *lakṣaṇa* as permanent *(nityā),* impermanent *(anityā),* and neither permanent nor impermanent *(na nityā na cānityā).*
- Section II.31 explains the four kinds *(caturvidha)* of Buddha intention *(abhiprāya)* and four kinds of mystery *(abhisaṃdhi)*.
- Section II.32 explains the teaching of interdependent co-origination *(pratītya-samutpādadeśanayā),* the characteristics of interdependent co-arising *(pratītya-samutpādannalakṣaṇa)*, and the meaning of the Buddha's exposition *(uktārthadeśanayā)* in the wish to explain the Mahāyāna teaching.

As space and time will not permit a full comparison of the contents of this chapter of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* and Mi-pham's commentary on this section of the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra*, in Appendix 2 I have provisionally provided the Tibetan text of topic vi and I intend in the near future to produce a paper regarding this comparison.

Now, in looking at Mi-pham's explanatory remarks on the defining-characteristics of reality as-it-is, we find interesting remarks about the Madhyamaka critique of Yogācāra in view of the three constitutive principles of reality. Also, perhaps the information here could contribute to the question of whether Mi-pham was a "rang stong pa" or a "gzhan stong pa." In any event, in conclusion, I present the following translation of his commentary (for the Tibetan text see Appendix 3) in the hope that it can become the basis for future investigation and comments.

Translation of Mi-pham's commentary

First, the constitutive principles of reality that may be intuitively known are freed of the four extreme [views] of existence, non-existence, one, and many. How is this so? The highest reality *(paramārtha-tathatā)* is not existent like the imagined and other-dependent constitutive principles [and therefore,] although what is called "all things" is none other than what is other-dependent—that is, the profound internal dependently co-originating reality, what is imagined refers to the attachment to what appears as the subject—object dichotomy as a substantive reality.

Even though ordinary people become fixated on what appears to be an appearance as substantive, the perfected which is the non-substantiality of the subject—object duality is the mode of being of the absolute, and therefore there is an "open-ness *(śūnyatā)*" that is propositionally defined as "[wherein] nothing exists."

The so-called "imagined and the other dependent constitutive principles of reality" and "the perfected" are not one and the same, but because they are not different insofar as they are without distinctions—that is, reality as-it-is—they are [said to be] one and the same. It is as stated in the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*: "The realm of the composite and the defining-characteristic of the higher reality are characterized as being devoid of [the distinction of] same [ness] and difference."

The imagined [constitutive principle of reality], in reality a mistaken generalization, is [characterized as] non-existent and the other-dependent [constitutive principle of reality], as the foundation for the imagined, is [characterized as] the appearance as two [subject-object dichotomy], but because the perfected is unperverted [and] is devoid of the two [subject-object dichotomy, the imagined cum other-dependent and the perfected] are not one and the same. They [stand in the relationship of] phenomenon *(dharmin)* and reality *(dharmatā)*.

Now if one asks: are they different? then [the reply is] they are not. There does not exist "the perfected [constituent of reality]" other than what is "the perfected" *(pariniṣpanna)*: that is, release from the imagined, the subject-object dichotomy based on the other-dependent; therefore, the phenomenal is other-dependent because truly it is the perfected. If it were the case that the two [imagined cum other-dependent and the perfected] were different, then it would follow that the other-dependent would not be devoid of the subject-object dichotomy and that is inadmissible; therefore, they should be understood [to be related] in the manner that composite things and impermanence or fire and heat are not different.

That higher reality, that is, the perfected, from the very beginning, has arisen and ceased uninterruptedly. In regard to a thing whose nature has not arisen from the relationship of cause and conditions there are many and various opinionated views. Because, at the time of *saṃsāra* or *nirvāṇa*, there is no distinction between former and latter, there is no decrease [of *saṃsāra*] or increase [of *nirvāṇa*], [they] dwell just as-they-are. For example, it is just as when there is a cloud in the sky, there is neither an increase nor a decrease [in reality-as-it-is, or] when there is a decrease in negative emotions [in *saṃsāra*] or an increase in wholesomeness [in *nirvāṇa*] there is neither an increase nor a decrease in reality-as-it-is. In so far as self-nature is naturally pure, there is no purity anew. For example, it is like the sky, excellent gold, water, and crystal that are naturally pure.

Although defilements are in themselves impure, just as the sky is free of incidental clouds, refined gold, water, and crystals of impurities and defilements, the perfected *(pariniṣpanna)* is free of defilements in view of being free of the two incidental obstructions. This is the defining characteristic of the higher reality. Thus higher reality that is free of the two [subject-object dichotomy] is explained as having five meanings—neither existence nor non-existence, neither one nor many, neither produced nor destroyed, neither increased nor decreased, and neither pure nor impure.

From the Madhyamaka standpoint: all things that appear through interdependent origination are neither non-existent in view of conventional designations nor existent in view of the higher reality and [they are] also neither existent nor non-existent. That which is non-existent as a higher reality but existent as a designation is the reality of entities; therefore, these two that are classified according to nominal-expressions-only are not

established as distinctly two, just as the heat of fire and the sweetness of molasses. If one should ask, “Is it only the third that is neither non-existent in view of the conventional nor existent in view of the higher reality reality-as-such?” the answer is no! There being no logical basis for establishing a third which is devoid of either phenomenon *(dharmin)* or reality *(dharma),* it is not possible [to establish] a third as the self-nature of things having the same designation as that reality-as-such *(dharmatā).* Therefore, to be freed from the four extremes—existent, non-existent, both, and neither—is to be freed from all mental constructs *(prapañca),* and it is maintained that one should realize that genuine existence *(satya)* that lacks the distinction between phenomenon and reality is not to be distinguished as two. Because reality-as-such *(dharmatā)* which is the same as that [and which] is freed from mental constructs *(prapañca)* is always identical to that which is freed from anything diminishing and arising, that is destruction, it does not possess even an iota of the defining characteristics of the duality of the pure or the impure.

Moreover, [those in] this system of Citta-mātra, who speak about all entities as none other than mental appearances, claim only luminosity (clear cognition) which is the other dependent [constitutive principle of reality] as the foundation for the substantive existence of appearances. If in the final analysis [one] takes that to heart, then because one would claim that the cause for the appearance of all designations [regarding] knowledge [or] goodness exists merely substantively, one would not claim the substantive existence of the higher reality as true existence and this would not contradict the Madhyamaka system. However, if the higher reality is claimed to be true existence [par excellence] then this would be contradictory to the Madhyamaka system; therefore, it is by this specificity alone that there could be a discrepancy of contradiction or non-contradiction to the Madhyamaka [system].

Insofar as the teaching of Maitreya and intention of charioteer Asaṅga are one and the same, they explain that some attain the first stage of experiential understanding by means of the direct perception of reality as-such *(dharmatā)* freed from the subject—object dichotomy, after having realized, in the first stage of zealous application *(adhimukti-carya-bhūmi),* that all entities are nothing but mind. And then, at the time of highest realization on the path of linking up, [they] experience that there exists no object in the mind, and because there is no object, they experience the non-existence of the subject also. And even though in the Citta-mātra, the *ālayavijñāna,* that is postulated as the cause for the appearance of the subject—object dichotomy [and] that presents [itself] as place, sense-object, and the body, is claimed to exist substantively, because the two [the subject—object dichotomy] that have not been established substantively are [nothing more than] variegated appearances, they are explained as being similar to an illusion etc. Therefore, because it is reasonable to experience that non-dual consciousness as a reality lacking a defining characteristic, the intention of the great charioteers of the mind, now and later, should be understood to be the same.

Now, why is it that the accomplished masters of the Madhyamaka critique the tenets of the Citta-mātra? It is that those overly arrogant expounders of the Citta-mātra tenets claim that in the context of Citta-mātra, although externally things do not exist, the mind exists substantively. [The statement,] “a rope even though empty of snake is not empty of rope” is a proposition, but they do not understand that a proposition is a matter of convention. It is the tenet of claiming that the non-dual consciousness exists substantively [and] absolutely that is criticized. But [the Madhyamaka] says that the intention

Ārya Asaṅga of in which the path of mind-only expounded by the Buddha is experientially known appropriately is not to be opposed. To speak in that way is not unreasonable. If the Sāṃkhyas [those who are in the domain of Tibet?][13] claim that the Śrāvakas who perceive the [four] truths are not different from the Madhyamaka who experience the two kinds of non-self, then the charioteer Asaṅga would be understood to have experienced the intention of the middle path, because he is sublime.

In general, although the ascertainment by the Madhyamaka that entities not interdependently co-arising are not produced is acceptable and there is no way of not accepting the tenets of the Citta-mātra, [it should be known that there are] two kinds of interdependent co-arising—the interdependent co-arising that differentiates the facticity and the interdependent co-arising that differentiates dis-ease and that which is not dis-ease.

First, the subtle, internal dependent origination that explains the manner in which all appearances arise from the *ālaya* (foundation of all) is to be experienced through the expertise of knowing the deep and subtle meaning of the bodhisattvas. That the perception that discriminates between the pleasant and the unpleasant is more subtle than the external interdependent origination has been expounded by the profound [one], Ārya Asaṅga in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraba* etc. From the twelve expositions of the external dependent origination that discriminates between the pleasant and the unpleasant, the profound [ones] have been expounded by Ārya Ārya Asaṅga in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraba* etc. Those *sūtras* of definitive meaning *(nītārtha)* and the profound mantras of Mantrayāna expound that a reality *(dharma)* other than the mind does not exist and that the root of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* depend upon the mind.

The principle that the reality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* arise through the strength of the mind but when the mind does not exist they do not exist, establishes that the negative factor of instability is an aspect of *saṃsāra* because [one's] action becomes emotionally tainted through the power of the mind, and [the principle] that one, having become accomplished in the Mahāyāna path from having produced compassion and wisdom by which the mind experiences non-substantiality [of the subject—object duality, established that], one becomes an Enlightened Being who possesses the five Wisdoms as a result of the transformation of the basis composed of the eight [cognitions] that have the *ālaya* [as their basis].

Even the Śrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas, by means of the mind that experiences the non-substantiality of the self, overcome suffering caused by existence; therefore, that the root cause of suffering is dependent upon the mind is to be accepted by even a Buddhist adherent.

Moreover, it is stated in the *rnam snang mngon byang,* an important [text for elucidating] the path, "when it is established that mind is without self-nature, effortlessly, the Mahāyāna path is experienced directly," and in the *dbu ma rin po che'i bstan bcos* that subsumes the essential points of all expert, well-known, Ācāryas of India, it is stated, "the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka is the subtle, internal Madhyamaka and the *phyi-don 'dod-pa'i dbu-ma* is the coarse external Madhyamaka" and when one investigates [this], because only the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka is profound, even the talented Candrakīrti understands it in this manner. Therefore, if this reasoning *(betu)* claimed by the Citta-

mātra that self-luminous knowledge of the voidness of the two (subject-object) is the ultimate of the cognitions possessing the subject-object [dichotomy] and that only this cognition which is inexpressible in the form "this is the subject-object dichotomy of that [voidness]" is taken to exist as substantive reality having voidness as its nature, then such a claim must be negated. But, if one is cognizant that primordial wisdom that is devoid of the subject-object [dichotomy and that] experiences directly by means of one's intrinsic awareness that the self-nature of that very knowledge is without origination from the very beginning, then that should be accepted.

In that manner, the claim by the Madhyamaka and the Vajrayāna must be accepted, but if primordial discriminating wisdom or the luminous mind did not exist, then it would be unreasonable to have a mental state that experiences the reality of dharmatā on the path of learning *(niṣṭba-mārga)*, but if at the time of *nirvāṇa* without remainder of the non-learners, the enlightened being did not possess primordial wisdom by which all was known, then because [that] would be indistinguishable from the *nirvāṇa* of the lesser vehicles [and] would be like the lamp flame going out, how would it be possible to understand the non-extinction of body, wisdom, and action of the Buddha? Therefore, although the great charioteers of the Madhyamaka and the Citta-mātra may seem to differ in the manner in which they systematize the path of the deep and profound *dharma*, if one knows the ultimate intention, namely the essence of understanding mutually the unity and depth of primordial wisdom, then one sees properly.

In short, the state of all entities of reality just-as-they-are is not a possible aspect, an impartial appearance or voidness what-so-ever, but there being a clear understanding of unity *(zung 'jug)* and the experiential understanding that there is no transformation in any situation of the ground, the path, and the fruit, there occurs the liberated from the precipice of defilement of opinionated beliefs.

Appendix 1

[238.2] dang po chos kyi de kho na nyid yong su tshol ba rtag tu gnyis bral sogs tshigs bcad gnyis te/kun nas nyon mongs pa dang rnam byang gi chos rnams kyi de kho na nyid tshol ba ni/kun brtags dang gzhan dbang dang yongs grub [238.3] ste ngo bo nyid gsum gyi sgo nas shes par bya ba la/dus rtag tu gzung ba dang 'dzin pa gnyis dang bral ba yin yang gzung 'dzin gnyis su snang ba 'di ni kun tu brtags pa'i mtshan nyid do//de ltar gzung 'dzin gnyis med [238.4] bzhin de gnyis su snang ba 'khrul pa'i gzhi'am rten gang yin pa gzhan dbang dang/gang zhig rnam pa kun tu ngag gis brjod par nus pa ma yin zhing/rnam par rtog pa'i spros pa med pa'i bdag nyid ni yongs grub ste/chos thams cad [238.5] kyi gnas lugs de kho na nyid yin no//

de ni gzung 'dzin gyi chos dang bral bas spros pa med pa'i rang bzhin so so rang gis rig par bya ba'o//de ltar kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid ni thag pa la sbrul bzhin du yod pa ma yin par shes par bya zhing [238.6] ma dag pa gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid ni spang bar bya ba ste/gzhan dbang la yod pa'i gzung 'dzin du snang ba sbyang bar bya ba yin pas so//rang bzhin gyis dri ma med par 'dod pa gang yin pa yongs grub la blo bur gyi dri ma rnams rnam par [239.1] sbyang bar bya ba ste/rang bzhin gyi[s?] dri ma med pa de ni rang gi ngo bo'i dbang du byas na nam mkha' rang bzhin gyis dag pa dang/gser rang bzhin gyis dag pa dang/chu rang bzhin gyis dwangs pa ltar rang gi ngo bo la ma dag pa

[239.2] ye nas med kyang/nam mkha' la spring dang/gser la 'dam dang/chu la rnyogs pa bzhin/blo bur gyi nyon mongs pas bsgribs te mngon du ma gyur pa yin pas nyon mongs de dang bral na rnam par dag pa nyid mngon gyur par 'dod do//

Appendix 2

Mi-pham MSA XII (211.4–314.4) Chos tshol gyi le'u bshad pa 'di la btsal bar bya ba'i chos (211.4) [numbers in square brackets indicate Tokyo volume sems tsam 1, leaf and line numbers]

VI btsal bar bya ba'i chos (211.4) yid la byed pa gang gis tshol ba (286.4)
VII yid la byed pa gang gis thsol ba (286.4)
VIII yongs su tshol ba'i bye brag (306.5)
IX chos tshol ba'i 'bras bu (308.4)
X don bsdu ba'i tshig bcad (313.6)

VI btsal bar bya ba'i chos (211.4)

1 bshad bya lung gi chos btsal ba (211.5)
2 rtogs bya don gyi chos btsal ba (237.5)

i de kho na nyid yongs su tshol ba—2 *kārakās* (238.2) [168a[2]]
ii sgyu ma lta bur yongs su tshol ba—15 *kārakās* (239.5) [168a[7]]
iii de bzhin du shes bya yong tshul ba—1 *kārakā*=MV I.1 (249.5) [170b[3]]
iv kun nyon dang rnam byang yongs tshul ba—2 *kārakās* (250.6) [170b[5–6]]
v rnam par rig pa tsam lyongs tshol ba—2 *kārakās* (252.5) [171a5]
vi mtshan nyid yongs tshol ba—8 *kārakās* (254.1) [171 b[2]]
vii rnam par grol ba yongs tshol—9 *kārakās* (264.3) [173a[3]]
viii ngo bo nyid med pa yongs tshol—2 *kārakās* (269–6) [174a[3]]
ix mi skye ba'i chos la bjod pa yongs tshol—1 *kārakā (212 A)* [174b[1]]
x theg pa gcig tu bstan pa'i dgongs pa yongs tshol—7 *kārakās* (275.1) [174b[3]]
xi rig pa'i gnas lnga yong su tshol ba (282.4) [176a[4]–176a[6]]

vi mtshan nyid yongs tshol ba—8 karikas (254.1) [171 b[2]]

[254.1] drug pa mtshan nyid yongs su tshol ba ni/ sangs rgyas rnams kyis sems can la/

zhes sogs tshigs bcad brgyad kyis bstan te/sangs rgyas rnams kyi sems can la/shes bya'i rang bzhin la mi rmongs [254.2] pa'i shes rab bskyed pas phan gdags phyir mtshan gzhi dang/mtshan nyid dang/rab tu dbye bas yang dag par bshad do//de gang zhe na mtshan nyid gsum po des rang rang gi ngo bo nyid dam rang bzhin du mtshon par bya ba'i [254.3] gzhi'am [rnam?] shes bya gzhi lnga po 'di tsam du zad de/gzugs kyi gzhi dang/ gtso bo sems kyi gzhi dang/'khor sems byung gyi gzhi dang/'dus ma byas pa'i gzhi'o//

gzugs kyi gzhi ni dbang po lnga dang don lnga [254.4] ste gzugs can gyi skye mched bcu po'o//sems kyi gzhi ni rnam par shes pa'i tshogs brgyad do //sems byung gi gzhi ni sems byung lnga bcu dang [da?] gcig go//ldan min 'du byed ni thob pa dang ma thob pa la sogs nyer gsum bshad pa lta bu'o//'dus [254.5] ma byas ni so sor brtag 'gog dang/brtag min gyi 'gog pa dang/nam mkha' dang/de bzhin nyid bzhi'o//

de la sems ni zhes pas sems kyi gzhi bstan no//

lta bcas zhes pas sems de yul la lta ba la yul dbang yid byed [254.6] gsum tshad dgos pas sems byung rnams dang/dbang po lnga dang yul lnga bstan te/yul gyi rnam pa yid la byed pas sems byung gi zhi bstan/

dbang lnga dang yul gzugs sgra dri ro reg bya lnga ste bcu pos gzugs kyi gzhi bstan/

de'i [255.1] gnas skabs zhes pas sems sems byung dang gzugs kyi gnas skabs la/thob pa dang ma thob pa skal mnyam dang srog dang gang zag sogs su btags pa bem shes gang rung min pa'i 'dus byas kyi char gtogs pa ldan [255.2] min 'du byed kyi gzhi bstan/

mi 'gyur pa zhes pas rgyu mtshan gyis 'dus ma byas ste/gnas 'jig pa gsum dang bral bas de'i ngo bo nam yang gzhan du mi 'gyur ba 'dus ma byas kyi gzhi bstan te

gzhi lnga po 'di ni mdor bsdus na [255.3] mtshan gzhi ste/'di la ma 'dus pa'i shes bya'i chos med pas na mtshan nyid gsum/gang la sgrub pa'i mtshan gzhir 'dod do//***blo brtan 'grel pa*** las sems ni zhes pas sems gzung bar snang pa dbang lnga yul lnga dang/[255.4] 'dzin par snang ba rnam shes tshogs drug po bstan/lta bcas zhes pas sems byung rnams bstan te gsal zhing 'phyo ba'i rang bzhin gyis yul la 'jug pa'i don du bshad par snang/ 'gyur la lar mtshan gzhi la mtshan bya'ng zer te/[255.5] mtshan nyid gsum du mtshon pa bya ba yin pas de gnyis go thob gcig par rung ngo//de dag gi nang gses kyi mtshan gzhi'i dbye ba byas na tshad med pa yod de re re la yang dbye brag tshad med pa ni sems dang gzugs sogs sems can gyi [255.6] rgyud dang/dus dang yul sna tshogs kyis phye bas shes bya'i grangs bzhin du mtha' med par 'gyur ro//mtshan gzhi'i lnga po de dag gi mtshan nyid ni mdor bsdus na rnam pa gsum ste/**kun brtags dang/ gzhan dbang dang yongs grub** [256.1] gsum ste/'di gsum ni chos de dag la gnyis su snang ba'i cha dang/snang ba'i rgyu dang/gnyis su ma grub pa'i cha nas mtshan nyid dam ngo bo nyid gsum du gnas so//

de gang zhe na dang po **kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid** ni/ji ltar phyi [256.2] rol gyi don med bzhin du ka bum sogs kyi ming gis brjod pa'i rtog snang tsam la don de dang der 'du shes nas/'di ni ka ba 'di ni bum pa'o zhes pa la sogs par don du grub par 'dzin pa'i 'du shes kyi rgyu mtshan las **kun brtags** [256.3] pa 'byung ste ming dang mtshan ma'i 'du shes 'di ni kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid kyi phyogs gcig go//de bzhin du de dag gi spros pas bag chags kyang **kun brtags** su bsdu ste yang dag min rtog gi rgyu yin pas so//thog ma med [256.4] pa nas goms pa'i bag chags de smin pa las ka bum rta glang sogs kyi don de dang de dngos su snang ba 'byung ste brda la byang ba rnams kyis de ming dang bsres te 'dzin la brda mi shes pas ming ma thogs kyang don de min dang 'dres rung du [256.5] snang ba de yang kun brtags so//mdor na gnyis su snang ba chos sna tshogs kyi spros pa'i bag chags sad pa las gnyis su snang ba'i chos sna tshogs la ming dang…mtshan mar gzung nas snang ba ltar mngon par zhen pa ni kun [256.6] **brtags pa'i mtshan nyid do//kun tu brtags pa** zhes pa'i nges tshig ni/

ming dang don ni ji lta bar/

ming dang don du snang ba gang

zhes pa/bum pa sogs kyi ming ni ji lta bar don lto ldir ba'i dngos po nyid du snang ba skye ste/don dngos [257.1] su ma mthong yang bum pa zhes pa'i ming tsam brjod pa las don lto ldir ba'i dngos po yod par 'dzin pa med de yang dag mi rtog gi rgyu yin la/lto ldir ba'i dngos po mthong tshe 'di ni bum pa'o zhes ming yod par [257.2] 'dzin pa ni don de yang dag min rtog gi rgyu mtshan du song ba yin te/yang dag pa na ming don la ngo bo nyid kyi 'brel ba gang yang med kyang/mtshan ma'i rnam par snang ba'i don de la ming blo bur du rtog pas sgro btags pa yin pas/[257.3] nam mi dran pa na don de glo yul 'char

ba'ng ming la don du sgro btags pa yin pas /de ltar ming dang don gyi mtshan ma phan tshun bsres nas 'dzin pa de chos sna tshogs so so ris chad du 'dzin pa yang dag min rtog gi rgyu mtshan du [257.4] gyur pa ni/gzung dang 'dzin pa sna tshogs tha dad pa gnyis 'dzin gyi blos **kun tu brags pa yi mtshan nyid** du 'dod do//

gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid gang zhe na/rnam gsum rnam gsum snang ba can zhes pas/rnam gsum snang ba dang po ni [257.5] gnas don lus kyi snang ba gsum ste gzung ba gzugs kyi phyogs so//rnam gsum snang ba phyi ma ni/yid dang/'dzin pa dang/rnam par rtog par snang ba gsum ste 'dzin pa sems sems byung gi phyogs so//de la gnas ni snang kyi [257.6] 'jig rten du snang ba'o//don ni phyi rol gyi yul gzugs sgra dri ro reg bya chos drug go//lus su snang ba ni mig rna sna lce lus dang yid dbang ste dbang po drug go//yid du snang ba ni nyon mongs pa'i yid de kun gzhi la dmigs nas bdag tu [258.1] lta ba'o//'dzin pa mig gi rnam shes nas lus kyi rnam shes kyi bar gyi sgo lnga'i rnam shes so//rnam par rtog pa ni yid kyi rnam par shes pa ste yul sna tshogs yongs su gcod cing de dang der rnam par rtog par byed pa'i phyir ro//snang [258.2] ba phyi ma gsum 'dzin pa dang snga ma gsum gzung ba'i mtshan nyid can du 'dod de/snang ba drug po de thams cad kun gzhi rnam shes la bag chags kyi khams yod pa sad pa las rmi lam ltar snang ba tsam las gzung 'dzin tha dad du grub pa [258.3] med kyang yod pa ltar gnyis su snang ba'i phyir na yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa khams gsum gyi sems sems byung rnams ni **gzhan gyi dbang gi mtshan nyid** do//***lang kar gsbegs pa*** las kyang/

lus dang long spyod gnas 'dra [258.4] ba/ sems tsam du ni ngas bshad do//

zhes gsungs so//de ltar na phyi dang nang gi chos su snang ba thams cad kyi gzhir gyur pa kun gzhi'i rnam shes tshogs bdun gyi 'khor dang bcas pa'i sems sems byung rnams la **gzhan gyi dbang** zhes [258.5] bya ste/kun nas nyon mongs pa'i bag chags kyi **gzhan dbang** gi rten 'brel las gzung 'dzin gyi chos su snang ba'i phyir **gzhan dbang** zhes ming de skad brjod do//

yong su grub pa gang zhe na/chos kyi dbyings stong pa nyid kyi mtshan nyid de [258.6] de la gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i dngos po **kun brtags pa'i mtshan nyid med pa** dang/gnyis stong gi mtshan nyid de bzhin nyid kyi mtshan nyid du yod pa nyid gang yin pa dang/gzung 'dzin med pa nyid kyis de bzhin nyid yod pa dang/de bzhin nyid [259.1] yod pas gzung 'dzin gnyis med pa yin pas/yod pa dang med pa gnyis po gang brjod kyang don gcig tu khyad med par 'dra zhing mnyam pa nyid yin pa ni/gzung 'dzin gnyis rnam bcad du khegs pas de bzhin nyid [259.2] yongs gcod du grub pa dang/de bzhin nyid yongs gcod du grub na gzung 'dzin gnyis rnam bcad kyi tshul du khegs pas de 'dra'i yod med don gcig tu khyad med pa dang/ glo bur ba'i dri ma dang 'dres pa'i cha nas ma zhi ba dang/rang gi ngo [259.3] bo'i cha nas rang bzhin gyi rnam par dag cing 'od gsal bas zhi ba yin pa dang/rtog ge'i yul ma yin par gzung 'dzin gyi spros pa kun dang bral bas rnam par mi rtog pa' ni **yongs su grub pa'i mtshan nyid do**//

mtshan nyid gsum po de [259.4] gzhi lnga po'i steng du yod pa shes par byed pa'am mtshon par byed pa ni mtshon par rnal 'byor gyi sa lnga ste/ bzhi dang skyed pa'am bzhag pa dang/me long lta bu dang/snang ba dang /gnas sam rten te de lnga gyi sgo nas chos rnams la sgro btags [259.5] tsam du shes par bya ba kun brtags kyi cha ji ltar yod pa dnag/gzung 'dzin du snang ba'i yang dag min rtog spang bar bya ba gzhan dbang gi rnam pa ji ltar yin pa dan/snang bar bya ba'i gzhi yongs su grub pa'i chos nyid ji ltar gnas pa gsal [259.6] bar glo'i yul du mtshong cing shes par byed pa yin no//

Appendix 3[14]

> [94.1] dang po de kho na nyid so so rang gis rig par bya ba'i mtshan nyid ni yod pa dang med pa gcig dang tha dad kyi mtha' bzhi dang bral ba ste/gang zhe na don dam pa de kho na nyid ni [94.2] ***kun brtags pa dang gzhan gyi dbang gi mtshan nyid*** lta bur yod pa *min* zhing/***yong su grub pa'i mtshan nyid*** *du med pa ma yin* te/chos thams cad ces bya ba ni zab mo nang gi rten 'brel gzhan dbang gi chos 'di las gzhan du med la/de la [94.3] gzung 'dzin gnyis su snang ba ltar grub par zhen pa ni kun btags so// de ltar snang zhing snang ba ltar byis pa so so'i skye bo rnams de ltar grub par zhen na yang/gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i gnyis chos su ye nas grub pa med par **yongs su** [94.4] **grub pa** ni gnas lugs sam don dam pa yin pas tha snyad du gang la gang med pa des stong pa nyid ni yongs gcod du grub pa yin pas yod pa'o//

kun btags *dang* ***gzhan dbang*** zhes bya ba de *dang/****yongs su grub pa*** *de dag* [94.5] *gcig pa [nyid added in bhasya] ma yin* pas de bzhin nam khyad med pa ma yin la tha dad ma yin pas *gzhan min* pa'o//de skad du yang ***dgongs pa nges par 'grel ba'i mdo*** las/

> 'du byed khams dang don dam mtshan nyid ni/gcig dang tha dad bral ba'i mtshan [92.6] nyid de/

zhes sogs gsungs pa ltar/**kun brtags** phyin ci log don la med pa dang/ **gzhan dbang** ni kun tu brtags pa'i gzhi gnyis su snang ba yin la/**yongs grub** ni phyin ci ma log pa gnyis kyis stong pa yin pas de dag gcig [95.1] ma yin te [/] de dag chos can dang chos nyid yin no// don dam yongs grub de ni gdod nas skye ba dang 'jig pa'am 'gag pa med de /gang rang gi ngo bo ye nas rgyu rkyen las skyes pa ma yin pa de [95.4] la 'jig pa lta la la yod/'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa'i dus na yang snga phyir khyad med pas na nam yang bri bar mi 'gyur te/'phel ba med cing de kho na bzhin du gnas pa dper na nam mkha' la sprin yod pa [95.5] dang med pa'i dus na 'phel 'grib med pa ltar kun nyon bri ba dang rnam byang gi phyogs 'phel bas de bzhin nyid 'bri ba dang 'phel bar mi 'gyur ba'am/rang gi ngo bo rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pas na gsar du rnam par [95.6] dag pa'ang med pa dper na nam mkha' dang gser bzang po dang chu dang shel rang bzhin gyis dag pa bzhin no//

rang bzhin gyi ngos nas dri ma bsal du med kyang nam mkha' la glo bur gyi sprin dang gser la gYa' dag chu la [96.1 rnyogs pa dang/shel la dri ma bral ba bzhin du yongs grub de yang glo bur gyi sgrib pa gnyis bsal ba'i stobs kyis dri ma rnam par dag par 'gyur ba de ni don dam pa'i mtshan nyid do/zhes don dam pa gnyis su med pa de don lngas [96.2] bstan te/yod min med min dang/gcig tha dad med pa dang/skye 'jig med pa dang/ 'phel 'bri med pa dang dag dang ma dag min pa lnga'o//

> **dbu ma ltar na** rten 'brel gyi dbang gis snang ba'i chos thams cad kun rdzob tha snyad du med pa ma yin [96.3] la/don dam par yod pa ma yin zhing/yod med gyis ka'ang ma yin te don dam par med pa de tha snyad du yod pa'i chos rnams kyi chos nyid yin pas de gnyis ming gi rnam pas dbye ba tsam las don la tha dad par gnyis su grub pa med de/[96.4] me'i tsha ba dang bu ram gyi mngar ba bzhin no//'on na kun rdzob tu yod pa dang don dam par med pa de gnyis ka ma yin pa'i phung sum zhig de kho na nyid yin nam zhe na ma yin te chos can dang chos nyid stong pa gnyis ka ma yin pa'i phung sum sgrub [96.5] byed kyi tshad ma med cing/phung sum pa de 'dra tha snyad kyi chos rnams kyi rang bzhin nam chos nyid du yang mi rung ngo//des na yod pa dang med pa dang gnyis yin dang gnyis min gyi mtha' bzhi dang bral ba ni spros pa thams cad bral ba [96.6] ste/chos dang chos nyid dbyer med pa'i bden gnyis dbyer med so so rang gis rig par bya ba zhes 'dod do//de 'dra'i chos nyid spros pa dang bral ba de ni skye 'jig bri gang bral bar rtag tu mnyam pa yin pas dag [97.1] pa dang ma dag pa sogs gnyis chos kyi mtshan ma rdul tsam med pa yin no//
>
> de yang **sems tsam pa'i lugs** 'dis chos thams cad sems kyi snang ba tsam las gzhan du med par smra zhing/snang gzhi [97.2] gzhan dbang gi rnam shes gsal rig tsam rdzas su yod par 'dod pa yin la 'dod tshul de'i zhe 'dod mthar dad na shes bde tha snyad thams cad snang ba'i rgyu yin pa'i rdzas yod tsam du 'dod pa las don dam bden grub kyi rdzas yod du mi [97.3] 'dod na dbu ma'i lugs dang 'gal ba gang yang med la/don dam par bden grub tu 'dod na dbu ma'i lugs dang 'gal ba yin pas khyad 'di tsam zhig gis dbu ma dang 'gal mi 'gal dpyad bya snang mod/

byams [97.4] chos skor dang shing rta chen po thogs med kyi gzhun rnams dgongs pa gcig par gang zag gang gis mos spyod kyi sar dang por chos thams cad sems tsam du rig nas/de nas sems la gzung ba med par nyams su myong [97.5] ba dang de nas gzung ba med phyir 'dzin pa'am med par sbyor lam chos mchog gi dus su rtogs pa'i rjes thogs su gzung 'dzin gnyis dang bral ba'i chos nyid kyi bden pa mngon sum rtogs pa'i sa dang po thob par gsungs [97.6] pa dang/sems tsam yin tshul kyang gnas don lus su snang ba'i gzung 'dzin gnyis snang gi rgyu kun gzhi'i rnam shes tha snyad du rdzas su yod par bzhed kyang de gnyis su ma grub bzhin sna tshogs su snang ba yin pas sgyu ma la sogs pa dang (text 'dre, but) 'dra bar [98.1] gsungs pa'i phyir na lugs 'dis gnyis stong gi ses pa de la bden grub kyi dngos po dang mtshan ma med par shin tu rtogs rigs pa'i phyir sems kyi shing rta chen po da mthar thug gi dgongs pa mthun par bzung bar bya'o//

'o na dbu [98.2] ma'i slob dpon rnams kyis sems tsam pa'i grub mtha' la dgag pa ci'i phyir mdzad ce na/de ni sems tsam gyi grub mtha' smra ba mngon pa'i nga rgyal can dag sems tsam gyi skabs su phyi don med kyi sems rdzas su yod ces pa/thag pa sbrul [98.3] gyis stong yang thag pas mi stong pa ltar/tha snyad kyi dbang du byas te khas len tshul yin par ma go nas/gnyis stong gi rnam shes la don dam par bden grub tu zhen pa'i grub mtha' sun dbyung ba yin gyi/sangs rgyas kyis bstan pa'i [98.4] sems tsam kyi lam tshul bzhin mngon par rtogs pa'i 'phags pa thogs med kyi dgongs pa bkag pa min par smra'o//

de ltar smras pa la mi rigs pa med de/gangs (grangs?) can pa'i khams pa rnams kyis nyan thos bden mthong rnams kyang bdag med [98.5] gnyis ka rtogs pa bdu ma pa dang

khyad med par bzhed pa yod na/shing rta chen po thogs med kyi dbu ma'i dgongs don rtogs pa smos cing gos te 'phags pa yin pa'i phyir ro//

spyir dbu ma pas rten cing 'grel 'byung gi chos rnams skye ba med [98.6] par gtan la phab pas chog gi/sems tsam gyi grub mtha' khas ma blangs thabs med pa ma yin yang/rten 'brel la yang ngo bo nyid rnam par 'byed pa'i rten 'brel dang sdug pa dang mi sdug pa rnam par 'byed pa'i rten 'brel gnyis las/

> [99.1] dang po kun gzhi las snang ba thams cad mched tshul bshad pa yin pas phra ba nang gi rten 'brel 'di byang chub sems dpa' phra zhing zab mo'i don la mkhas pas rtogs bya yin pas/sdug pa dang mi sdug pa rnam par 'byed pa rag [99.2] pa phyi'i rten 'brel bcu gnyis bstan pa las zab par 'phags pa thogs med kyis ***theg bsdus*** sogs su gsungs/de dang mtshungs par **nges don gyi mdo sde** rnams dang **zab mo'i sngags rgyud rnams** las kyang sems las ma gtogs pa'i [99.3] chos med pa dang/'khor 'das gnyis ka'i rtsa ba sems la thug par gsungs te/sems kyis dbang gis 'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos 'byung gi sems med na de dag med par 'gyur tshul ni /sems kyi dbang gis nyon rnongs [99.4] pas las 'du byas nas kun nyon 'khor ba'i phyogs 'grub pa dang/sems kyis bdag med rtogs pa'i shes rab dang snying rje bskyed nas theg pa chen po'i lam bsgrub pas tshogs brgyad kun gzhi dang bcas pa gnas gyur pa'i ye shes [99.5] lnga'i rang bzhin can gyi sangs rgyas su 'grub pa dang /nyan rang rnams kyis kyang gang zag gi bdag med rtogs pa'i sems kyis srid pa nye bar len pa'i myang 'das bsgrub pa yin pas kun byung gi rtsa ba sems la rag las pa ni nang pa sangs [99.6] rgyas pa sus kyang khas len dgos par ma zad/
>
> sems de rang bzhin med par gtan la phab na tshegs chung [chud?] dus theg pa chen po'i lam mngon par rtogs par 'gyur zhes lam gyi gnad chen po yin par **rnam snang mngon byang** las gsungs pa [100.1] [**pa repeated** but not needed] dang rgya gar gyi yul du mkhas pa chen por yong su grags pa'i slob dpon thams cad kyi gnad bsdus pa ***dbu ma rin po che'i*** *bstan* ***bcos*** las**/**
>
> **rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma (Yogācāra-Madhyamaka)** la phra ba nang gi dbu ma dang [100.2] **phyi don 'dod pa'i dbu ma** la rags pa phyi'i bdu ma

zhes bshad cing/nyams len gyi dus su rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma nyid zab pas dpal ldan zla ba grags pas kyang nyams len 'di ltar du mdzad pa yin zhes gsal bar gsungs/[100.3] des na gnyis stong gi shes pa rang gsal zhes pa sems tsam pas khas len rgyu 'di gzung 'dzin can gyi rnam shes kyi mthar thug pa de'i gzung 'dzin 'di yin brjod du med pa tsam gyi rnam shes zhig rang gi ngo bo mi stong pa'i bden grub tu [100.4] yod pa la go na dgag bya yin la/shes pa de nyid gdod nas skye ba med pa'i rang bzhin rang rig pas mngon sum myams su myong ba gzung 'dzin med pa'i ye shes rang gsal la go na bsgrub bya yin la/

de lta bu dbu ma dang sngag gnyis kas khas len dgos kyi/[100.5] so so rang rig pa'i ye shes sam 'od gsal ba'i sems de med na slob lam du chos nyid kyi bden pa rtogs pa'i blo yod par mi rigs la mi slob pa'i lhag med myang 'das kyi dus na sangs rgyas la rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes med na theg dman [100.6] myang 'das mar me shi ba lta

bu dang khyad med pas sangs rgyas kyi sku dang ye shes dang phrin las mi zad pa ji ltar ‘dod/de’i phyir dbu sems kyi shing rta chen po dag zab pa dang rgya che ba’i chos kyi lam srol ‘byed tshul gyi rnam bzhag tha dad lta bur snang yang [101.1] mthar thug gi dgongs pa ye shes kyi klong du gcig tu mthun par ‘jug pa’i gnad shes na shin tu legs par mthong ngo//

mdor na chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs de kho na nyid ni snang stong ris chad kyi phyogs gang rung ma [101.2] yin par zung ‘jug

so so rang gis rig par bya ba yin cing de gzhi lam ‘bras bu’i gnas skabs kun du ‘gyur ba med par rtogs na mthar ‘dzin gyi lta ba ngan pa’i gYang sa las grol ba yin no//

Notes

1 This chapter constitutes a working paper. Ideas and translations presented here are tentative and are subject to change. This paper was first read in Beijing, China, at a seminar in Tibetan Studies, July 25–28, 2001 and has been revised for this publication.

2 The question of the ontological status of *vijñāna* (consciousness, cognition, perception) has been the ground for interpreting *āśrayaparāvṛtti* (transformation of the basis) differently which in turn gave rise to the question of whether or not the Yogācāra should be interpreted according to the Tathāgatagarbha tradition. Although, in this chapter, I will not be looking further into such a question, it should be pointed out that I do not favor the Tathāgatagarbha interpretation.

3 Åke Boquist, *Tri-svabhāva: A Study of the Development of the Three-Nature Theory in Yogācāra Buddhism.* Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions, Vol. 8. Tord Olsson (ed.). Sweden: Department of History of Religion, University of Lund, 1993, 10.

4 John Whitney Pettit, *Mipham’s Beacon of Certainty—Illuminating*. Boston, Mass.: Wisdom Publication, 1999. See also Paul Williams, *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness: A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defence*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998.

5 *Theg pa chen po mdo sde’i rgyan gyi dgongs don rnam par bshad pa theg mchog bdud rtsi’i dga’ ston la ldeb,* in Sonam Topgay Kazi, *Collected Writings of ‘Jam-mgon ‘Ju Mi-pham rGya-mtsho.* Vol 2. Gantok: mDo-sDe rGyan Gyi rNam bSad, 1975.

6 *Theg chen bsdus pa’i snying po mchan bcas.* Poti style. Found as ‘Jam-mgon ‘Ju Mi-pham rgya mtsho. 1984. Expanded edition of the complete works of ‘Ju Mi pham. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, V, 1–27.

7 The figures 94.1 and 101.2 refer to leaf and lines numbers.

8 The word “gsum pa” refers back to 4.2 where the five major divisions into which the whole text is divided are listed. Consequently, this section on “what is to be contemplated” *(bsam par bya ba)* comprises the third division and it in turn is discussed from Chapter VII to Chapter IX of the text as indicated.

9 Here, numbers in square brackets refer to leaf and line number in the sDe dGe, Tokyo edition, volume Sems tsam 1 and are presented here for future use. Thus, [168a^{2}] means p. 168a, line 2 of the Tokyo edition.

10 See Appendix 2 for the Tibetan text of Mi-pham’s full discussion of this section.

11 I am indebted to Dr Andreas Docteur of Copenhagen for obtaining a copy of this text for me while he was a student in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Calgary. The text information is as follows: *Theg chen bsdus pa’i snying po mchan bcas*. Poti style. Found as ‘Jam-mgon ‘Ju Mi-pham rgya mtsho. 1984. Expanded edition of the complete works of ‘Ju Mi pham. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, V, 1–27.

12 The reference II. 1, for example, refers to Chapter II section 1 as determined in the earlier works on the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* by Etienne Lamotte and Professor G.M.Nagao.

13 The Tibetan text reads: *gangs can pa'i khams pa rnams* which can be read "those Khams people who have [land of] snow", but *gangs can pa* is probably a mistake for *grangs can pa* which means Sāṃkhya and is probably a better reading.

14 The root text of the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra* is given in bold.

8
ENTERING THE FRAY[1]

John Daido Loori

The main case

One day Guishan, after sitting the whole day, gathered his feet in his hands, pointed to his straw sandals, and said to Yangshan, "All hours of the day we receive people's support. We should not betray them."[i]

Yangshan said, "Long ago, in Sudatta's garden, the Buddha expounded just this."[ii] Guishan said, "That's not enough. Say more."[iii] Yangshan said, "When it is cold, to wear socks for others is not prohibited."[iv]

The footnotes

i This is pertinent. He wants the whole world to know about it.
ii When the wind blows, grasses bend.
iii What can he say? It simply cannot be explained,
iv Very intimate, but what does it mean?

The commentary

All masters throughout time have always looked to guiding and aiding all living beings. They would set up their shops according to their capacities and in response to the imperatives of time, place, position, and degree. Appearing and disappearing in harmony with the occasion, they created countless kinds of expedient means to alleviate suffering. Guishan wanted everyone to know, so he stirred things up by saying, "All hours of the day we receive people's support. We should not betray them." Yangshan was an adept, and could not help but respond. Guishan's intention, however, was unfathomable; he wanted more. Without hesitation, Yangshan again rose to meet the old man's challenge. But say, what was Yangshan's meaning?

We should understand that to wear socks for others is a very personal matter. It is the seamless Dharma activity that is the ten thousand hands and eyes of Great Compassion itself. It is the spiritual light of the four virtues of the Bodhisattva manifesting in the ten directions. But tell me, right now, how do you manifest it in your life?

Capping verse

Pure jewelled eyes, virtuous arms,

formless and selfless, they enter the fray.
The great function works in all ways,
These hands and eyes are the whole thing.

Every night millions of Buddhist practitioners all over the United States chant the Four Bodhisattva Vows. Every night each one of us vows to save innumerable sentient beings, to manifest the ten thousand hands and eyes of Great Compassion, of Kannon Bodhisattva. For me, these hands and eyes are none other than the *sangha,* the community of dedicated practitioners who take up the challenge to address the endless list of problems we face today.

Right now we are prosperous as a nation and as a *sangha*. The *Dharma* is growing in the United States. Centers continue to appear and new practitioners are engaging in the practice. At the same time, millions of people are starving. World peace is still a dream. This Great Earth is dying. Overpopulation persists and diseases are rampant. Our children bear the main brunt of suffering. The imperative is clear. The burning question is: what will we do? What will you do?

We take up this question personally and collectively in the context of training within the Mountains and Rivers Order. The Board of Governors is one of the several ruling bodies of Zen Mountain Monastery, and it is made up of a cross-section of the people we serve: students, non-students, and people with a casual interest in the monastery. Every five years we invite them to come together as a group and to look to the future, to help us envision where the priorities are. The recommendations that come out of those meetings are then relayed to the Board of Directors to determine whether or not we're capable of undertaking the suggested projects, and if we are, to figure out how.

In the past we've taken the initiative and begun programs such as the National Prison Buddhist *Sangha* and the Zen Environmental Studies Institute. Usually, when we take this sort of action, it is in response to a specific need that arises and galvanizes our attention. Right action, which is one of the eight gates of our practice here, means meeting the needs of a growing *sangha*. It means guiding and aiding all living beings and responding to their cries for help. It means taking care of our fragile planet.

This kōan addresses the issue of compassion within the context of our vows.

> *One day Guishan, after sitting the whole day, gathered his feet together in his hands, pointed to his straw sandals, and said to Yangshan, "All hours of the day we receive people's support. We should not betray them."* My footnote to that says: This is pertinent. He wants the whole world to know about it.
>
> *Yangshan said, "Long ago, in Sudatta's garden, the Buddha expounded just this."* Footnote says: When the wind blows, the grasses bend.
>
> *Guishan said, "That's not enough. Say more."* The footnote adds: What can he say? It simply cannot be explained.
>
> *Yangshan said, "When it is cold, to wear socks for others is not prohibited."* The footnote to that concludes: Very intimate, but what does it mean? Not prohibited means it's okay to wear socks for others.

The commentary begins, *All masters throughout time have always looked to guiding and aiding all living beings*. That's what our vow is; that's what our practice is. It's not a self-centered endeavor. Right from the outset, we should understand clearly that individual liberation is a contradiction in terms. Personal liberation is fulfilled only within the context of social liberation.

Trying to achieve real freedom is impossible while approaching this practice with a self-centered point of view that excludes even a single speck of dust. Look at what liberation is and what it means to be free. To be liberated means to merge with the ten thousand things, with the whole catastrophe. As Master Dōgen says, *To study the Buddha Way is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self, and to forget the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand things*. To be enlightened by the ten thousand things means to merge with the ten thousand things.

All masters throughout time have always looked to guiding and aiding all living beings. They would set up their shops according to their capacities, and in response to the imperatives of time, place, position, and degree. "Setting up according to their capacities" is a critical line. We have a tendency to fall into extremes. We either wallow in hopelessness or hide from our problems like an ostrich with its head in the sand; or we run around frenziedly like a chicken without a head. Either way, we don't accomplish anything.

Look at Vincent Van Gogh. The man was all heart, but he was not very practical. Before he was an artist he was the minister for a small coal-mining town. There he witnessed unimaginable suffering and deprivation. Wanting to help, he immediately started giving away everything he owned: his clothes, food, furniture, his house. In two weeks he had nothing left and his ministry had ended. He became just another shivering soul. That was not at all skillful of him. Granted, he was a great artist, but he was a lousy minister. Setting up your shop according to your capacity means to know exactly what your capacity and power are. Each one of us has personal power, and it's different for different people. There are things that I can do that you can't do. There are things that you can do that I can't do. We need to know clearly what we are capable of—how to use our talents and energy for the benefit of others, responding appropriately to the imperatives of time, place, position, and degree. That appropriate response is at the heart of practicing the Precepts, and it's also a guideline to right action. It is the essence of skillful means. Skillful means change according to time. What was effective twenty years ago may no longer be effective today. What is skillful in one place may not be appropriate in another place. Your position in relation to the problem determines what skillful means you can use.

While I was a research scientist working in a chemical plant, I found out that the company was polluting a local stream. I was in a position of authority at the time, so I used it. I went to the plant engineer and talked to him about the problem. At first he was resistant, but when I offered to help him figure out an alternative way to get rid of our waste he agreed to cooperate. We worked together and the pollution stopped. In this case, my position allowed me to intervene directly. Five years later, when a different ecological crisis involved the same plant, I was no longer working there. All I could do was stand outside the fence with pickets and protest. My position changed, so my way of dealing with the situation had to change too.

Most important is the matter of degree. In any given situation, how do we know how much action is necessary and optimal? That's a very difficult question. Many of us engage in a worthy cause with a vengeance, frequently fired by self-righteousness. We know unequivocally what's wrong and what's right, and from that kind of discrimination we obtain plenty of fuel to fire our anger. To be able to funnel that anger into effective and skillful action requires that we take all aspects of a situation into consideration.

The Buddha was a master of skillful means. The ancestors were masters of skillful means. *Appearing and disappearing in harmony with the occasion, they created countless kinds of expedient means to alleviate suffering.* Appearing and disappearing are important dimensions of compassionate action. Sometimes you need to be very present; sometimes you need to be invisible. Both can be equally effective.

Guishan wanted everyone to know, so he stirred things up by saying, "All hours of the day we receive people's support. We should not betray them." Yangshan was an adept, and could not help but respond. Guisban's intention, however, was unfathomable; he wanted more. He wouldn't settle for a quote from the Buddha. In fact, I'm surprised that Yangshan was so shallow in his first response.

When the second challenge went out: *Without hesitation, Yangshan again rose to meet the old man's challenge.* He said, *"To wear socks for others is not prohibited."* It's okay, but what was his meaning? This is where we really get into the heart of this kōan.

We should understand that to wear socks for others is a very personal matter. It is the seamless Dharma activity that is the ten thousand hands and eyes of Great Compassion itself. Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, is often depicted with ten thousand hands and eyes. It is said that she responds to the cries of suffering in the world. With her ten thousand hands and eyes she responds and takes care of problems. She acts without a moment's hesitation.

At the center of the Bodhisattva ideal, ten thousand hands and eyes notwithstanding, is the reconciliation of opposites, the merging of differences—self and non-self, sentient and insentient, man and woman, as one reality. Master Dōgen calls it, "I am thus. You are thus." This is the fundamental metaphysical and religious ground of Great Compassion, the non-dual *Dharma*. It is seamless because it has no edges. It encompasses the whole universe. There is nothing outside of it.

It is the spiritual light of the four virtues of the Bodhisattva manifesting in the ten directions. Dōgen writes beautifully about those four virtues: giving, loving speech, service for the welfare of all beings, and identity with others. He says: *Giving means non-greed. Non-greed means not to crave. It means to give freely and not expect to receive anything in return because of that giving. That is true giving. Let us offer flowers of the distant mountains to the Tathāgata or share the treasures with all sentient beings in spiritual things as well as material things. When the Way is surrendered to the Way you attain the Way. Upon being enlightened you necessarily let the Way come through itself. The self gives the self for the sake of giving the self. The other gives the other for the sake of giving other.* It is purposeless. There is no reward, no payoff. In this kind of giving, we merge with each other.

Dōgen continues: *Spiritual teachings are material wealth and, likewise, material wealth is spiritual teachings. If you study giving carefully, you realize living as well as dying are both giving. To be sure, to make a living and to regulate a business is none other than giving. Flowers are innocently fondled by the wind, and birds trust freely to*

time. These too are feats of giving. Indeed, by reason of being originally gifted with the power of giving, one's present self came into being. Giving is free of and undefiled by dualism. There is no giver and no receiver.

About the second virtue, loving speech, he writes: *As you meet sentient beings, you arouse the sense of compassion first in your mind, and treat them with consideration and affectionate words completely devoid of any violent or spiteful language. As you take delight in affectionate words, they will gradually flourish. Even those loving words which were before unknown and unperceived will show themselves. As long as your present life lasts, you should take pleasure in speaking compassionately. Generation after generation, let us exert ourselves unremittingly. Compassionate speech is fundamental to the pacification of enemies and the reconciliation of others. You should ponder that thoughtful words arise from the loving mind. The loving mind has compassion as its seed.* Compassionate action does not have to be grandiose. We don't have to be white knights in shining armor, galloping off to battle. Often, all that's required is simply some loving speech.

About the third virtue: *Working for the welfare of all beings means that you contrive ways to benefit all sentient beings, high and low. You think of various means that will be most congenial to their well-being. Commiserate with the turtle in trouble. Take care of the sparrow suffering from injury. When you see the distressed turtle, watch the sick sparrow, you do not expect any repayment for your favor. You are moved entirely by your desire to help. So serve enemies and friends equally. Assist self and others without discrimination. If you grasp this truth, you will see that this is the reason why even the grasses and trees, the wind and water are all naturally engaged in the activity of giving.* This is selfless giving. It is boundless giving.

Lastly, about identity with others: *Identity with others is non-difference. It applies equally to self and other. There is a truth that after the self assimilates others to itself, the self lets itself be assimilated by others. The relationship of self and other varies according to circumstances.* To save all sentient beings, you must be totally prepared to be saved by all sentient beings.

We should understand that to wear socks for others is a very personal matter. It is the seamless Dharma *activity that is the ten thousand hands and eyes of Great Compassion itself*. This is the non-dual *Dharma*. When it is realized, it is called wisdom. When wisdom arises, compassion immediately arises with it. There is no way to hold it back. There is no way to limit it. There is just the spiritual light of the four virtues of the Bodhisattva manifesting in the ten directions in all of our encounters.

This teaching has always been implicit in Mahāyāna Buddhism from its inception thousands of years ago. But it never had the opportunity to manifest itself freely. It flourished in countries where there were significant political constraints, where there was no religious freedom. Monasteries were isolated. They were not in direct contact with much of the pain and suffering surrounding them. But we do not have that problem. We live in an age of communication, knowing very well what is going on at the furthest corners of the earth. We have the potential to feed the world. We have the potential to heal the earth. We have the potential to take care of the waste that we produce, to house the homeless, to bring world peace. It is said that there are three million Buddhists in the United States. That is a formidable number of people who are vowing every day to save

all sentient beings. Why isn't there more political action arising within Buddhist communities?

"Wearing socks for others" means knowing personally the suffering of others and responding accordingly. It is always possible to become complacent, to take the easy route. The easy route is to realize yourself and then go off to enjoy your life: "To hell with everybody else. I got mine." I am thankful that the Buddha did not take the easy way; that Ānanda, Bodhidharma, Dongshan, Guishan, Yangshan, Maezumi did not saunter off into the sunset. The path of the Bodhisattva is to not rest on your laurels until each and every living being has been saved. Again, liberation can only be fulfilled in the context of the liberation of all beings. We should remember that every time we take our seat in the *zendō*.

The commentary ends: *But tell me, right now, how do you manifest it in your life*? That is the ever-present challenge. There are ways we respond to this challenge as a *sangha*. There is a long list of things we do and can do as a community, and that list will continue to grow as long as we are practicing here. But aside from the *sangha,* as an individual, what will you do in your everyday activities? Each and every one of us has countless opportunities for manifesting true giving, loving speech, service for the welfare of all beings, and identity with others. Are you willing? Are you able? Do you have the power to manifest the ten thousands hands and eyes of Great Compassion? That is what Kannon is.

The capping verse: *Pure jewelled eyes, virtuous arms, /formless and selfless, they enter the fray*. What does formlessness have to do with absolute, non-dual identity? Formlessness is not self-centered. A self-centered action is completely different from a selfless action. Doing good is not necessarily compassionate activity. Sometimes, on the surface, compassion may not seem like compassion at all. In compassion, there is no sense of separation between the doer and the doing. Someone falls, you pick them up; no one giving, no one receiving. "Formless and selfless, they enter the fray." It means taking a chance. It means practicing the edge.

The great function works in all ways. The Dharma Wheel turns in all directions. The great function is your life, the Buddha nature. *These hands and eyes are the whole thing.* What are these hands and eyes? They are not the hands and eyes of some mythical deity that was incorporated into the pantheon of Buddhism. The ten thousand hands and eyes of Great Compassion are *your* hands and eyes, *your* life. Every time that great heart of compassion comes to life inside your body, you give birth to the hands and eyes of Kannon Bodhisattva. That is where she exists—no other place. Our challenge as individuals and as a *sangha* is to rise up to meet our vows to save all sentient beings. Please, take care of this.

Note

1 Adapted from John Daido Loori Roshi's commentary on "Guishan's 'Do Not Betray Others'" Master Dōgen's *Three Hundred Kōan Shōbōgenzō,* Case 47—a collection of kōans gathered by Master Dōgen during his study in China. The kōans from this collection, often called the *Chinese Shōbōgenzō,* appear extensively in the essays of Dōgen's *Japanese Shōbōgenzō. The True Dharma Eye* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2005), translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and John Daido Loori Rōshi with commentary, verse and footnotes by Daido Rōshi, is the first Western commentary on *The Chinese Shōbōgenzō.*

9
STEALTH POLEMICS

Tsong kha pa on the difference between *sūtra* and tantra

John Powers

Introduction

In pre-industrial societies such as fifteenth-century Tibet, the composition of texts was a time-intensive and laborious process. There were few potential readers for works like Tsong kha pa bLo bzang grags pa's (1357–1419) *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra (sNgags rim chen mo),*[1] as literacy was primarily confined to the monastic universities, and scholastics like Tsong kha pa generally had no professional stake in composing texts. Successful completion of a text on religious philosophy and practice like the *Great Exposition* had no bearing on tenure or promotion, and authors received no royalties. Moreover, Tibet had inherited from India a huge corpus of canonical and extra-canonical texts, which encompassed the entire range of Buddhist philosophy and practice, as well as such fields as art, architecture, music, and medicine. Because of the high regard Tibetans had for the texts they had imported from India, only indigenous works considered to be significant contributions to Buddhist studies were widely read. The libraries of Tibetan monastic universities have thousands of books by both Indian and Tibetan authors that never caught on and are seldom if ever read, and the odds were generally against any particular text's gaining a wide readership.

Given these factors, when a Tibetan author decided to compose a new work, the decision would often be based on a perceived sense of urgency, a need for a change in prevailing attitudes and practices. Such a concern is evident in the *Great Exposition*. Although mostly written in a textbook style, statements throughout the text indicate that its composition was part of Tsong kha pa's efforts to reform the Buddhism of his day. As a reformer, he sought to highlight perceived deficiencies in other systems and to reestablish what he considered to be the "true" or "correct" system originally presented by Śākyamuni Buddha. In his written works and public lectures, he often did this by discussing texts, ideas, and practices that he considered to be authoritative and comparing them to doctrines and practices of other authors or schools with which he took exception. In his writings he was strongly aware of—and critical toward—other schools and their tenets, and his comparisons of Buddhist systems were often marked by a pronounced stridency and sectarianism.

A sectarian tendency has also characterized the school that he founded, the dGe lugs pa ("System of Virtue"), which gained prominence in large part due to its emphasis on strict adherence to cenobitic monasticism and the rules of the *Vinaya*.[2] As Snellgrove and Richardson have noted, the school's rapid rise to prominence owed a great deal to a general public perception that its members exemplified traditional Buddhist ideals and adhered to the rules of conduct of the early Buddhist order.[3] Although most Tibetan Buddhist authors derived little personal or professional benefit from the composition of

religious texts, leaders of movements who successfully advanced new paradigms and challenged established practices and ideas sometimes were able to alter power relations in their favor, and this often led to increased patronage, recruitment of followers (who would also work to advance the cause), and even influence over developments in other schools.

All living religious systems are characterized by competition: rival groups vie with each other for power, influence, prestige, money, and patronage. Those which successfully advance and defend new paradigms challenge the mainstream, and this process commonly prompts mainstream schools to alter their own practices and doctrines to meet challenges. For a reformer like Tsong kha pa, whose biography and writings indicate a deep concern with establishing the primacy of cenobitic monasticism based on the *Vinaya* rules, the outcome of this competition was of supreme importance, as he believed that the very future of Buddhism and its integrity were at stake.

His biography reports that Tsong kha pa traveled throughout Tibet, learning from a range of teachers from various traditions, immersing himself in the study of philosophy and dialectics, and that he also devoted a great deal of time to the study of topics related to tantra, which by this time was accepted throughout Tibet as the pinnacle of Buddhist practice. Both his biographies and his own compositions reveal a concern with what he perceived to be the degeneration of religious practice in his time. Adherence to monastic rules was apparently lax in some areas of Tibet, and at least part of the reason for this appears to have been the general acceptance among Tibetan Buddhists of the notion that tantra—and highest yoga tantra *(rnal 'byor bla med kyi rgyud, anuttara-yoga-tantra)* in particular—is the pinnacle of Buddhist practice and the most rapid and effective means of attaining Buddhahood. Since many of the most popular tantras studied in Tibet advocated the use of desire as part of the path to Buddhahood—and because many highest yoga tantra texts contained instructions on the practice of sexual yogas that were widely believed to be particularly effective in reducing the time required for attainment of Buddhahood—it is not surprising that some of Tsong kha pa's contemporaries relegated traditional monastic practices requiring celibacy and renunciation of desire to an inferior status. According to the dGe lugs pa historian Sum pa mkhan po:

> When our elder brother [Atiśa] traveled to Tibet there were many monks, but some of them [engaged in] sexual activity and murder. Some neglected the aspect of practice, claiming that liberation is attained by [holding the correct] view [of emptiness]. Others only had faith in the *Vinaya* and were averse to the bodhisattva trainings and mantra. Others followed the tantras without paying attention to monastic vows.[4]

According to Sum pa mkhan po, Atiśa taught that all of these aspects should be integrated in the path, and he emphasized the necessity of adherence to monastic vows as a basic preliminary training for anyone who aspires to Buddhahood. Although some tantrics claimed that their practices could greatly shorten the time required to complete the path, they were simply mistaken in thinking that this could be accomplished without the foundation of unbroken monastic vows, and their indulgence in actions forbidden in the *Vinaya* would inevitably lead to disaster for them and others foolish enough to follow them.

The traditional Mahāyāna path, as outlined in Indian *sūtras,* was said to require a minimum of three "countless eons" *(bskal pa grangs med pa, asaṃkhyeya-kalpa)*[5] to complete, but adherents of tantra asserted that tantric yogas could greatly reduce the time required, and highest yoga tantra texts claimed that diligent practitioners might attain Buddhahood in as little as one human lifetime. The promises of greater efficacy and reduction of the time required to complete the Buddhist path had been important factors in the widespread acceptance of the supremacy of highest yoga tantra in north Indian Mahāyāna circles, and since these were the major source for the importation of Buddhism to Tibet, it is not surprising that highest yoga tantra came to be regarded by Tibetan Buddhists as the pinnacle of Buddha's teachings.

In his writings and oral instructions, Tsong kha pa explicitly harked back to the work of Atiśa (982–1054), whose mission to Tibet is believed by traditional Tibetan scholars to have revived the dharma and to have helped in establishing the supremacy of Buddhism in Tibet.[6] Like Tsong kha pa, Atiśa sought to reform Tibetan Buddhism, and he was concerned with moral laxness within the Buddhist communities of Tibet. He presented a vision of the path that integrated tantric and non-tantric practices, and that also stressed the necessity of adherence to monastic rules as a precondition for successful tantric practice.

Although Atiśa had a profound influence on the character of later Tibetan Buddhism, there were other competing strands of Buddhism that were entering Tibet at this time. Atiśa brought a vision of the path that had become dominant in the north Indian monastic universities which supplied much of the literature and many important scholars to Tibet, but there were also circles of non-monastic tantrics (mostly concentrated in Bihar and Bengal) that viewed the practices of Buddhist monasticism as inferior to those of highest yoga tantra and that saw adherence to monastic vows as a hindrance to the attainment of Buddhahood. The leading figures of these traditions were often charismatic and iconoclastic lay tantrics who considered cenobitic monasticism to be appropriate only for people of inferior capacities. These lay tantrics were often portrayed by members of the monastic establishment as charlatans who were mistaken in thinking that their practices transcended those of their monastic contemporaries, and for their part they commonly characterized the monastics as plodding and misguided people who foolishly denigrated practices that they were unable to comprehend.[7]

Atiśa, and Tsong kha pa after him, considered such views to be both dangerous and antithetical to Buddhist practice. In the *Great Exposition* and several other works Tsong kha pa portrays such people as misguided, claiming that they bring harm to themselves and others. For example, in his commentary on Asaṅga's "Chapter on Ethics" *(Śīla-parivarta)* in the *Bodhisattva Levels (Bodhisattva-bhūmi),* Tsong kha pa writes that some Buddhists say of adherence to monastic vows:

> "We are Bodhisattvas; we are [practitioners of] secret mantra. Thus we should 'transcend' [the monastic vows], and the higher [vows] will purify [the transgression of lower vows]." They say this and enter into laxity. When one has adopted the two higher vows [bodhisattva vows and tantric vows], the major transgression of contradicting bodhisattva precepts creates an even larger [transgression] that contradicts the tantric vows in the context of this [Buddhist] teaching […] In light of this formulation,

> how can those who claim to be Mahāyānists but who do not maintain either of the two vows [of laypeople and monks] have the slightest basis for asserting this? Thus they pollute the Teacher's dispensation with the filth of their sick thoughts, and so we who desire what is best should avoid them like poison.[8]

The vehemence of his condemnation indicates how dangerous Tsong kha pa considered such ideas to be.[9] Similar sentiments may be found throughout his works, along with statements extolling the value of cenobitic monasticism. In another short work on the difference between *sūtra* and tantra, for example, Tsong kha pa advises his student dKon mchog mtshul khrims:

> [Buddha] has said that for taking up tantra it is best to be a fully ordained monk; the next best is to be a novice; and one should at minimum be a person with lay vows. Therefore the presentation of vows is posited on the basis of how many [one actually upholds] and not merely on how many one has promised [to uphold]. This is why [Kamalaśīla] has said in the *Illumination of Reality (Tattvāloka)* that if someone maintaining both individual liberation and bodhisattva vows practices tantra, he or she will actualize results much more quickly. He asserts that those who uphold both ordination and bodhisattva vows also achieve [tantric] attainments through upholding tantric vows. Then one attains them much more quickly than those who only uphold the tantric vows.[10]

Similarly, he begins another short work, *Compendium of the Essence of the Ocean of Monastic Discipline ('Dul ba rgya mtsho'i snying po bsdus pa)* with the statement, "Reliance on [monastic discipline] is the means for traveling easily to the city of liberation."[11] In the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path (Lam rim chen mo)* he concludes his work by indicating that while the practices he has outlined throughout the book are important and effective, Buddhists who have great compassion and who want to help sentient beings as quickly as possible should engage in tantric practice: "Thus after training in the paths that are common to both *sūtra* and tantra, you should enter into secret mantra, which is far more valuable."[12] But, he cautions, successful tantric practice requires that one strictly adhere to both lay and monastic vows. He asserts that people who transgress their vows thinking that they are abrogated by tantric commitments

> do not have great, middling, or inferior attainments. Therefore, the texts of highest yoga tantra also teach that those who do not uphold their vows, those who have inferior initiations, and those who do not cognize reality may practice, but do not accomplish anything at all. Thus, those who talk of cultivating the path but do not uphold the vows and commitments have thoroughly deviated from the tantric method.[13]

As these statements indicate, Tsong kha pa considered monastic vows and conventional Buddhist morality to be a precondition for successful Buddhist practice and a necessary

basis for the path. He also clearly viewed the idea that people holding tantric vows could abrogate monastic or lay vows with impunity as profoundly misguided and dangerous.

The difference between *sūtra* and tantra

The Great Exposition of Secret Mantra, composed as a comprehensive analysis of the tantric path, followed the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path,* which outlined a graduated path to Buddhahood that incorporated trainings common to tantra and what Tsong kha pa refers to as the "*sūtra* path," which comprises the practices of the bodhisattva path as outlined in Indian Mahāyāna *sūtras*. These center on the awakening of the altruistic intention to become a Buddha in order to benefit others *(byang chub kyi sems, bodhicitta)* and the cultivation of the six "perfections" *(pha rol tu phyin pa, pāramitā)*. According to Tsong kha pa, such practices are common to both *sūtra* and tantra, but their cultivation is much more rapid in tantra.

The four opening sections of the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra* follow the common Tibetan division of tantras into four sets: action tantra *(bya rgyud, kriyā-tantra),* performance tantra *(spyod rgyud, caryā-tantra),* yoga tantra *(rnal 'byor rgyud, yoga-tantra),* and highest yoga tantra.[14] In the first section, Tsong kha pa is particularly concerned with differentiating *sūtra* (which he refers to as the "perfection vehicle" or "*sūtra* vehicle") and tantra (which he refers to as the "mantra vehicle"), and this concern recurs throughout the text.

In his opening remarks on the subject, Tsong kha pa states that individual vehicles can be posited if: (1) there is a great difference between them in terms of inferiority and superiority in either the vehicles as the result or goal toward which one progresses; or (2) if there are different stages or paths that differentiate the vehicles as the causes by which one progresses. If paths have no great differences in these respects, then they should not be distinguished as different vehicles.[15] Moreover, in the differentiation of *sūtra* and tantra a true distinguishing feature must: (1) be found in tantra but not in *sūtra;* (2) be common to all four tantra sets; and (3) be an important difference.[16] In reference to the goals of the two vehicles, Tsong kha pa states (contrary to the assertions of other tantric masters) that there is no difference, because both aim at the same goal, which is Buddhahood;[17] since there is no goal or state higher than this, the goals of both vehicles are the same.[18] There is also no difference in realization between the two: both *sūtra* and tantra contain the same view of emptiness (the understanding that all phenomena lack inherent existence), and the followers of both vehicles realize the same emptiness. Tsong kha pa also states that there is no presentation of emptiness superior to that of the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka school, which is common to both vehicles.[19] Moreover, both vehicles have the same thought—the generation of *bodhicitta*—and the same behavior—training in the six perfections—although they differ in methods of training in these perfections.[20]

One important factor in tantra, according to Tsong kha pa, is that its practices "use desire in the path." Although *sūtra* practitioners may also use desire and other afflictive emotions—which normally bind people to cyclic existence—as aids in the path, tantric practices do so more skillfully.[21] Desire is used "in the manner of worms" that are born in wood and eventually completely consume the wood.[22] In tantra, one confronts the reality

of one's lower desires, and through special tantric practices one transforms them into means to salvation.[23] The sublimation of short-term goals to achieve long-term goals is also important, since tantra advocates renunciation of immediate desires in order to gain the highest goal, which is Buddhahood. Tantra as expounded by Tsong kha pa provides models and a coherent identity for the initiate and requires a total commitment from its followers. It also offers special means for development of a positive self-image, which in tantra takes the form of deity yoga *(lha'i rnal 'byor, devatā-yoga),* in which one can develop the sense of oneself as already being a Buddha and as performing the deeds of a Buddha. Integration and control of the personality are accomplished partly by the development of cognitive structures, for instance ideas and beliefs about the world, and also by the special practices of tantra which bring together the collections of merit and wisdom in a single consciousness.

The differentiating factor

Tsong kha pa finds the essential difference between *sūtra* and tantra in the factor of method *(thabs, upāya),* one of the two means by which one progresses toward the goal of Buddhahood (the other being wisdom *(shes rab, prajñā).* As he presents it, the *sūtra* (or perfection) vehicle contains the practices of the six perfections and the cultivation of the ten bodhisattva levels *(sa, bhūmi),*[24] as well as meditation on emptiness, as the contributing causes of the actualization of Buddhahood. These two factors of method (the perfections and levels) and wisdom (meditation on emptiness) are practiced separately but conjointly, and they are finally brought together and perfected with the attainment of Buddhahood. In the *sūtra* path, the perfections and related practices are held to be contributing causes of the actualization of a Buddha's form body *(sprul sku, nirmāṇa-kāya),* and meditation on emptiness is held to be the main contributing factor in the actualization of a truth body *(chos sku, dharma-kāya).*[25] The virtuous activities of *sūtra* bodhisattvas, cultivated over a long period of time, serve as the causes of maturation of form bodies, and so their bodies improve with each rebirth. They gradually approximate a Buddha's body, adorned with the major and minor marks that characterize Buddhas. In their final lifetimes, because of accrued merit, they attain bodies that have the major and minor marks of a learner—which are similitudes of a Buddha's marks—and with the attainment of Buddhahood these bodies transform into bodies of fully actualized Buddhas.[26] Through meditation on emptiness, the suchness *(de bzhin nyid, tathatā)* of phenomena, *sūtra* bodhisattvas overcome the cognitive obstructions *(shes sgrib, jñeya-āvaraṇa)* and during the course of three countless eons progressively develop a similitude of a Buddha's truth body.

In tantra, however, practice is different. Tantra, according to Tsong kha pa, possesses special practices that can greatly shorten the path to Buddhahood and that are superior to, and more complete than, those found in *sūtra*. In tantra one trains in deity yoga, a practice in which one meditates on oneself as possessing the "four purities": the body, abode, resources, and deeds of a Buddha; and, most importantly, one visualizes oneself as being a deity who in one entity embodies the full actualization of the factors of method and wisdom.[27] Tsong kha pa writes:

> At the time of the fruit, the base—a body adorned with the major and minor marks—and the mind of non-apprehension [of inherent existence] which depends on it abide at one time as an undifferentiable entity. In the same way, at the time of the path, the method is that the yogi's body appears to his own mind in the aspect of a *tathāgata's* body, and at the same time his mind becomes the wisdom apprehending suchness—the non-inherent existence of all phenomena. These two are a simultaneous composite, undifferentiable in the entity of one consciousness.[28]

This, according to Tsong kha pa, is the meaning of "undifferentiable method and wisdom" in tantra. In tantra one cultivates a vivid appearance of a divine body, along with divine pride in being the deity. There is also "vastness" at the time of the fruit of Buddhahood, an ultimate vastness that achieves the welfare of others. In tantra method and wisdom are not separate entities that are merely compatible (as in *sūtra*), but are "complete within the entity of one mind."[29]

Deity yoga, in Tsong kha pa's system, is the essential differentiating element between the two Mahāyāna vehicles. It is the central practice of tantra and is not found in *sūtra*. Tantra "uses the effect as the path" in cultivating a path that is similar in aspect to the desired fruit of Buddhahood.[30] Tsong kha pa states that the two bodies of a Buddha cannot be achieved through wisdom lacking method (or method lacking wisdom) and that:

> although *sūtra* has practices for cultivating method and wisdom, in tantra these are practiced as two aspects that are conjoined. Because tantra practices both method and wisdom together in an undifferentiable entity that embodies both simultaneously, progress is made far more quickly than in *sūtra*.[31]

In addition to the claim that tantra possesses superior methods leading to Buddhahood, Tsong kha also claims that only tantra can finally achieve this fruit.[32] Not only are other paths incomplete, but they are at best only subsidiaries to the tantra path.

The superiority of tantra

In the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, Tsong kha pa considers the positions of Bu ston rin chen grub (1290–1364) and other writers on the question of how tantra surpasses *sūtra* (indeed, he seems to have used Bu ston's discussion as a basic source) and rejects various formulations regarding the essential distinguishing feature(s) of tantra in general (that is, what distinguishes all four tantra sets from *sūtra*).[33] In doing this, he not only indicates how tantra is superior to *sūtra* but also implies that his own presentation of tantra surpasses those of other schools. In other words, there is a covert sectarian intention behind the overt discussion of the superiority of tantra: Tsong kha pa is indicating how tantra outshines *sūtra*, and in doing so is attempting to demonstrate that his own understanding surpasses that of rival tantrists.

Contrary to Bu ston, Tsong kha pa contends that with respect to view—the wisdom consciousness realizing emptiness—there is no difference between the vehicles.[34] Furthermore, the outline of the five Buddhist paths—accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning—is common to both vehicles, as is their final goal of Buddhahood.[35] Generation of *bodhicitta* is also common to both vehicles, and both vehicles use meditation on mantras as a means to reach Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. Both vehicles seek the same awakening *(byang chub, bodhi),* and their followers are able to cognize the suchness *(de kho na nyid, tathatā)* of all phenomena by following the practices of both vehicles; both vehicles practice the perfections, and both have as their main paths the practice of method and wisdom for the sake of achieving the form body and truth body of a Buddha. Tantra has some features of paths that are not found in *sūtra,* but according to Tsong kha pa these are not essential, and so they cannot serve to differentiate *sūtra* and tantra.[36]

Contrary to the assertions of other scholars,[37] Tsong kha pa also thinks that the sharpness or dullness of the faculties of practitioners of the two vehicles cannot serve to differentiate them, since then one would have to make many further differentiations in tantra itself, because within tantra there are many levels of practitioners. Moreover, although tantra uses desire in the path (which Bu ston thinks is a feature that distinguishes tantra from *sūtra*), Tsong kha pa points out that perfection vehicle bodhisattvas sometimes do not abandon mental afflictions (for example, desire), but use them as aids to practice; and he adds that in tantra when there is no purpose for manifesting desire or hatred followers of the tantra path should try to avoid them. Tantra does contain more methods—and superior methods—for using desire, but this difference in degree alone cannot serve as a major differentiating factor. Tsong kha pa also thinks that the tantra path in general is faster, but he asserts that difference in speed is not sufficient as a differentiating factor, since the three lower tantras and highest yoga tantra differ in terms of speed.

The main feature that separates the two vehicles, according to Tsong kha pa, is their respective methods that serve as causes of becoming a protector of all sentient beings. The perfection vehicle cultivates paths that accord in aspect with a truth body, for example meditation on emptiness, but it lacks meditations and practices aimed at the actualization of form bodies. Tantra, by contrast, teaches many methods that lead to the attainment of form bodies through its deity yoga practices, and because of the "vastness" and effectiveness of these practices tantra greatly surpasses *sūtra*. In *sūtra* one practices the first three perfections in "limitless ways over a limitless period of time," and this training empowers the mind so that eventually the wisdom consciousness realizing the emptiness of inherent existence of phenomena can remove the cognitive obstructions. Tantra begins with generation of *bodhicitta,* as does *sūtra*, and also involves practice of the perfections (though not in limitless varieties over limitless time, as in *sūtra*), but in addition it uses deity yoga, the special tantric means for amassing the collections of method and wisdom quickly.[38]

Tsong kha pa's exposition of tantra sets out special criteria for distinguishing who can practice its path. He states that only bodhisattvas who have already cultivated *bodhicitta* are "suitable vessels" for this teaching. Those who have not cultivated this intention should not enter the tantric path, and they should not even be introduced to a *maṇḍala*, hand seals *(mudrā),* or secret mantras.[39] In general, the chief trainees of Mahāyāna must

have very strong compassion, and the chief trainees of tantra must have an even greater capacity for compassion than *sūtra* practitioners. They should also (especially the chief trainees of highest yoga tantra) wish to attain Buddhahood very quickly in order to benefit many sentient beings.

One should first remove whatever is discordant with *bodhicitta* and fully dedicate oneself to pursuing Buddhahood in order to benefit others. This must be a total commitment: if one's commitment is only verbal, one's being a Mahāyānist will be only verbal. One must initially turn one's mind away from this life. If one does not do this, it will be an obstacle to the path. One should be mindful of the ever-present possibility of death and bad transmigrations, and one should not be attracted to the possible wonders of future lives. One should deeply realize the faults of cyclic existence and then overcome the fault of seeking happiness only for oneself by training in love, compassion, and *bodhicitta,* and then one should practice a "non-artificial *bodhicitta,*" that is, a total existential commitment to pursuing the goal of Buddhahood based on universal compassion. Next one should seek to understand the actions of bodhisattvas and generate a wish to train in them. If one can bear the burden of the deeds of bodhisattvas, one should engage in their practice, and if one can also take on the higher vows of tantra, one should do so. Then one is taught *maṇḍala*, *Gurupañcaśika* and, having purified reliance on the guru, one can enter into a mantra.[40]

Concluding remarks

The criteria Tsong kha pa sets out for tantric practice are important in his larger agenda of reforming Tibetan Buddhism because they would exclude all but a select few. Only those whose motivation is to become a Buddha in order to benefit others should practice tantra, and Tsong kha pa also indicates that the criteria for practice of highest yoga tantra are even more restrictive: only people who have directly realized emptiness and who have an unusually keen wish to benefit others are suitable vessels for highest yoga tantra. Since few Tibetan Buddhists would claim such attainments, these criteria effectively exclude all but an elite minority. Tsong kha pa indicates, however, that most dedicated practitioners can engage in other sorts of tantric practice, and that they will derive great benefit from them. Moreover, most serious practitioners are able to engage in the essential tantric practice of deity yoga. This is significant because the practice of deity yoga is fully concordant with cenobitic monasticism and with adherence to *Vinaya*. Although Tsong kha pa agrees with the majority opinion of his day that highest yoga tantra is the pinnacle of Buddhist practice, he also indicates that it should be reserved for the exceptional trainees who directly realize emptiness and are in a great hurry to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of others. Those who do not fulfill these criteria should presumably be aware of their limitations and engage in practices that are more suitable to their capacities.[41]

Tsong kha pa argues that Buddhism contains innumerable paths, each of which was presented for a particular type of practitioner. Although highest yoga tantra is the supreme of all Buddhist paths, it is only suitable for a very few advanced practitioners; others should follow a path appropriate to their actual capacities. Thus, in his *Brief Teaching on the Stages of the Path* he states that successful adherence to both tantric and

non-tantric vows is an essential precondition for any tantric practice, including highest yoga tantra. He adds:

> There do exist some exceptional persons who trained thoroughly in past [lives], and so do not train for a long time in this life. But even so, they gain a deep understanding of profound [emptiness] in this lifetime. But such [cases] are extremely rare, and those of us who are different from them should seek [Buddhahood] through reasonings based on study of scripture and so forth.[42]

This idea continues today in the dGe lugs pa tradition, which asserts that Tsong kha pa himself—although he was really an emanation of the Buddha Mañjuśrī and so could have engaged in sexual yogas without incurring any real transgression of vows—decided to postpone practice of the sexual techniques of highest yoga tantra until after his death (in the intermediate state or *bar do*) in order to avoid confusing followers of inferior capacities, who might decide to emulate their master and engage in practices that were unsuitable for them and would involve a breach of monastic rules (and consequent negative karma). Tsong kha pa's conclusion that deity yoga is the essence of tantra, not surprisingly, accords with his reformist agenda, which valorizes cenobitic monasticism as the most effective lifestyle for most practitioners and which relegates the special sexual techniques of highest yoga tantra to a small elite (who in Tsong kha pa's view would normally operate outside of the established monastic orders, and who thus would not undermine the importance of adherence to traditional *Vinaya* for most practitioners).

When I first realized that the *Great Exposition* was composed at least partly in order to advance this agenda, I wondered why he did not directly confront his opponents, but instead used the tactic of defining tantra in such a way that the definition marginalized certain practices of highest yoga tantra by reserving them for the elite (while still admitting that they are the most effective and rapid paths to Buddhahood). His biographies indicate that he was hardly shy about engaging in controversy on topics of Buddhist doctrine and practice, and they contain numerous stories of his debates with opponents on a range of Buddhist topics (and not surprisingly, given his importance to the dGe lugs pa tradition, he invariably triumphs). The answer to this puzzle probably lies in the fourteen basic vows of tantra, one of which (number three) prevents tantrists from engaging in sectarian controversy regarding tantra with other tantrists. Tsong kha pa's writings and biographies indicate that he took these vows very seriously and that he believed the texts which promised terrible retributions in special tantric hells for those who transgressed the vows. Given these factors, he undoubtedly felt constrained from directly rebutting his opponents, even if he believed that their interpretations of tantric texts were fundamentally flawed and harmful to others. After reading through several texts on Tsong kha pa's life and consulting dGe lugs pa scholars familiar with the hagiographical literature on him, I have not seen any instances in which Tsong kha pa debated on tantric topics. His debates were primarily concerned with philosophical issues discussed in Indian *sūtras* and *śāstras,* but he appears to have scrupulously avoided controversy on tantric topics.

Despite this limitation, his writings and biographies indicate that he was profoundly concerned with reforming Tibetan Buddhism, and his attempt to define the essence of

tantra appears to have been at least partly intended to refute opponents without directly engaging them in sectarian debate. His biographies also relate that in 1401 he joined the Sa skya scholar Red mda' ba and the bKa' rgyud translator sKyabs mchog dpal bzang po in convening a seminar for hundreds of monks from the various orders of Tibetan Buddhism (held at a retreat near 'Bri khung) to clarify the teaching and practice of *Vinaya* and to emphasize its importance for all the vehicles of Buddhism.[43] The fact that he worked to organize the seminar indicates how seriously he viewed issues relating to monastic conduct, and so it is not surprising that such issues figure prominently in the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, which was written in 1405. He began his analysis in the *Great Exposition* by agreeing with the generally accepted notion that tantra is the supreme system of Buddhist practice, but then defined tantra in such a way that it marginalized practices that he considered to be dangerous for most trainees. Under the cover of seeking definitional and terminological precision in a textbook on tantra, he subtly advanced a hidden agenda, which allowed trainees to engage in the central tantric practice—deity yoga—while maintaining monastic vows.

Viewed in this light, the frequent sectarian statements about *sūtra* trainees—which state that they are inferior in intelligence, compassionate motivation, and capacity for practice—appear in a new light. When I first read the *Great Exposition*, the stridency of his negative characterizations of *sūtra* practitioners led me to conclude that his intended audience was advocates of the superiority of *sūtra*. Further study of the Tibetan Buddhism of Tsong kha pa's day, however, indicated that at that time there were no advocates of the superiority of *sūtra*, and that from the beginning of Buddhism's dissemination to Tibet tantra was widely regarded as the pinnacle of Buddhist practice (although study of other aspects of Buddhism, including *sūtras* and *śāstras*, was also important). Thus, it is unlikely that he was trying to establish the superiority of tantra, because this would not have been in doubt among his contemporaries.

The central issue for many Buddhists of his time was the relative value of the competing traditions of charismatic non-monastic tantrics and the monastic orders like the dGe lugs pa who asserted the importance of adherence to *Vinaya* as a precondition for Buddhist practice. The positions of the two strands were well known in his day, as were their advocates. Thus, Tsong kha pa's contemporaries would have recognized his intended targets without his having to name them specifically, even though their positions were obliquely referred to in a discussion of a topic on which all agreed, namely the superiority of tantra. Since he could not attack their views on tantra directly because of his tantric vows, he attacked them by using the subterfuge of refuting rival understandings of the differences between *sūtra* and tantra (but without directly criticizing other tantrists). Overt sectarianism toward particular tantrists would be problematic, but through analyzing the differences between *sūtra* and tantra he could call into question doctrines of rival schools without directly attacking them.

When I began considering what sort of political agenda the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra* might be advancing, it became clear that it was not intended simply as a textbook of tantric Buddhism, but was also a manifesto in which Tsong kha pa attempted to influence power relations in favor of a vision of Buddhism in which tantra is valorized but in which sexual techniques that were antithetical to *Vinaya* rules were relegated to the periphery. This agenda appears to have been successful, because it continues to be a dominant theme in the dGe lugs pa, which became the most powerful order of Tibetan

Buddhism after the ascension to power of the fifth Dalai Lama (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) in the seventeenth century.

Sectarian concerns and arguments can be found throughout Buddhist literature (and in other religious systems). People who think that they have a vision of truth that supersedes those of others often seek to undermine the positions of their rivals by indicating the ways in which their own schools are superior to those of others. Tsong kha pa's analysis of the differences between *sūtra* and tantra was an attempt to demonstrate the superiority of his own vision of tantra in contradistinction to those of unnamed rivals. By discussing how tantra surpasses *sūtra* (an idea that was generally accepted in Tibet at that time), he was also able to indicate how other tantrists had gone wrong on key points.

Such sectarian concerns are not new in Buddhist thought. The perfection vehicle itself seems to have arisen as a sectarian movement opposed to other traditions of Buddhism (which it characterized as "Hīnayāna," or "Lesser Vehicle").[44] Tantra in turn arose as a sectarian movement within Mahāyāna, and tantrists commonly see themselves as following a separate and superior path that sets them apart from other Mahāyānists. In addition to this basic difference, Tsong kha pa makes the further claim that only tantra can lead to Buddhahood and that *sūtra* practitioners are mistaken as to the final effectiveness of their vehicle with regard to the goal of achieving Buddhahood. According to him, after following the *sūtra* path to the end of the tenth bodhisattva level *sūtra* practitioners must leave their vehicle behind and adopt the practices of tantra, which alone can complete the path to Buddhahood. Some tantrists (including Tsong kha pa) also state that although Śākyamuni Buddha appeared to attain Buddhahood through the Perfection path, this was only an appearance, and they hold that all Buddhas must practice highest yoga tantra in order to fulfill the bodhisattva vows to reach Buddhahood in order to benefit all sentient beings. So in the final analysis, tantra is not only a better path than *sūtra*, but is also the *only* path to the goal.

Such exclusive claims are common to founders of sects, who are often concerned not only with establishing the superiority of their respective paths but also with showing that finally only their paths can bring about salvation. One problem for Tsong kha pa is the fact that the traditional biographies of the Buddha do not mention that he followed the tantric path, but instead portray him as engaging in practices found in Hīnayāna Buddhism and gradually perfecting the qualities of a Buddha over many lifetimes until he finally gained full awakening while meditating under the Bodhi Tree. Tsong kha pa (and other tantrists) generally explain this discrepancy by stating that although Buddha seemed to follow the Hīnayāna model, in reality he practiced tantra in order to become awakened (as all Buddhas do) and only appeared to be following a different path for the benefit of people who were not advanced enough to be taught the special techniques of tantra. Thus Buddha is said by Tsong kha pa to have been awakened before the lifetime in which he manifested himself in our realm as Śākyamuni Buddha, and he contends that Buddha was "really" practicing tantra despite appearances to the contrary.

Such contentions serve a number of sectarian functions: they give tantric practitioners an explanation for the discrepancies between the traditional biographies of Buddha's life and their own practices, indicate the superiority of tantra, and serve to reinforce commitment to the tantric path as the only means to reach the goal of Buddhahood. In addition, the implicit arguments against other tantrists provided reasons for Tsong kha pa's followers to believe that their own schools' presentation of tantra was superior to

those of other schools, which in turn presumably led them to value their school over others, even other tantric schools.

Notes

1 *rGyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang chen po'i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad rnam par phye ba,* "The Stages of the Path of A Conqueror and Pervasive Master, A Great Vajradhara, Revealing All Secret Topics," P6210, vol. 152, To. 5281. Portions of the text have been translated: Part 1: Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* trans. Jeffrey Hopkins (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977); Parts 2 and 3: Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, *The Yoga of Tibet*, trans. Jeffrey Hopkins (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981).

2 It should be noted that the name "dGe lugs pa" may have originally been a contraction of "dGa' ldan pa'i lugs pa," referring to dGa' ldan monastery, but for its adherents it came to mean "System of Virtue" because of this school's emphasis on reform of monastic discipline and Buddhist doctrine.

3 David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (New York: Frederick A.Praeger, 1968), p. 181.

4 Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal by or, *dPag bsam ljon bzang,* Sarat Chandra Das (ed.) (Calcutta, 1908), pp. 185–188.

5 In traditional Buddhist cosmology, a "countless eon" is the amount of time that passes between the creation and destruction of the universe.

6 When Tsong kha pa established his new order, the dGe lugs pa, it was initially referred to as the "New bKa' gdams pa," implying that it was the continuation of Atiśa's bKa' gdams pa tradition. In later times the association of Tsong kha pa and Atiśa was so close that Tsong kha pa is said in some texts to have been a reincarnation of Atiśa. See, for example, Lokesh Chandra (ed.), *Vaiḍūrya ser po*, *A History of the dGe lugs pa Monasteries of Tibet* (Delhi, 1960), pp. 53.3ff.

7 An example of the non-monastic tantric portrayal of the monastic establishment—which highlights the tensions between the two strands—is the biography of Mi la ras pa written by gTsang nyon Heruka (*Mi la'i mgur 'bum: The Collected Songs of Spiritual Experience of Rje-btsun Mi la ras pa* (Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen, 1983)), in which the charismatic tantra tradition is extolled as supreme and monastics are portrayed as clearly inferior in both realization and morality to their non-monastic tantric contemporaries Mar pa and Mi la ras pa.

8 Tsong kha pa, *Byang chub sems dpa'i tshul khrims kyi rnam bshad byang chub gzhung lam* (Peking Tripitaka vol. 154, p. 69a.5–8).

9 This polemical tone has also been remarked on by Mark Tatz in his article, "Whom is Tsong-kha-pa Refuting in His Basic Path to Awakening?" in Lawrence Epstein and Richard F.Sherburne (eds), *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V.Wylie* (Lewiston and Queenston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989, p. 151. Tatz mentions (pp. 153–154) several Tibetan authors who assert that the tantric vows "purify" transgressions of lower vows (lay precepts, monastic vows, and bodhisattva vows), so that tantrics who engage in actions forbidden by their monastic vows are not tainted by sin for violating them. Some examples of Buddhist authors who hold this view are: Grags pa rgyal mtshan, mNga' ris Paṇḍita, and Dharmaśrī.

10 *Lam gyi rim pa mdo tsam du bstan pa,* P6077, vol. 153, p. 160b.2–3.

11 *'Dul ba rgya mtsho'i snying po bsdus pa:* in Glenn H.Mullin and Lobsang Rapgay, *Lama Mipham's Annotated Commentary to Nāgārjuna's Stanzas for a Novice Monk* (Freewood Acres, NJ: Mahāyāna Sūtra and Tantra Press, 1995), p. 65.

12 *Byang chub lam rim chen mo,* India, n.d., p. 1066.6.

13 Ibid., p. 10667.5.
14 For a traditional presentation of this division, see mKhas grub rje, *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems,* trans. F.D.Lessing and Alex Wayman (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), pp. 141ff.
15 *sNgags rim chen mo,* pp. 8a.6ff. See Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet* (part one of the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*), trans. Jeffrey Hopkins (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), pp. 100–101.
16 Ibid., pp. 8a–10a.
17 Tsong kha pa refutes the idea that tantra aims at or achieves a higher Buddhahood than that of *sūtra*. He cites Abhayākara and Tripiṭakamāla as proponents of this erroneous view and claims Maitreya and Śāntarakṣita as scholars who support his own view.
18 See Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* pp. 139–150 and the Dalai Lama's commentary, p. 69, where he asserts that the goal of Buddhahood in both vehicles is the same. He also states that all four tantras aim at the same Buddhahood as does *sūtra,* and so the two vehicles cannot be distinguished either by field of intent or object of attainment (ibid., *Tibet,* p. 74).
19 Ibid., pp. 39–42 and 173–174.
20 Ibid., p. 114. The six perfections (generosity, ethics, patience, effort, concentration, and wisdom) are the primary qualities in which bodhisattvas train in order to become Buddhas.
21 He emphasizes, however, that this greater skillfulness does not serve as an important distinguishing factor.
22 Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* p. 161.
23 Michael Argyle and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (in *The Social Psychology of Religion* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 202–203) bring up a topic that may be relevant to tantra, especially to its practices which use desire in the path to salvation. They note that religious activities often seem to be sublimations of sexual impulses, and sexual symbolism seems to be almost universal in religion. Hans Mol ("Religion and Sex in Australia," *Australian Journal of Psychiatry,* no. 22, 1970, pp. 105–114) suggests that religion and sex are alternative forms of commitment and that sexual indulgence is a form of self-integration that is incompatible with religious activities. Paul Wallin ("Religiosity, Sexual Gratification, and Marital Satisfaction," *American Sociological Review,* vol. 22, no. 3, June 1957, pp. 300–305) thought that religious activity provides a substitute for sexual satisfaction in marriage, and Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi think that higher levels of religiosity are generally correlated with lower degrees of sexual activity; they speculate (*The Social Psychology,* p. 199) that religious and sexual activities may be alternative ways of satisfying similar needs. When one considers these speculations with regard to tantra, it seems that the tantric system is something of an anomaly in that it combines sexual activity and religious activity in a single integrated practice, although in the final analysis religious activity is paramount because the final goal is to overcome sexual desire by using it to eliminate itself.
24 The ten bodhisattva levels are the stages through which a bodhisattva progresses on the way to Buddhahood. These are hierarchically ordered, and each represents a distinctive advance in spiritual attainments.
25 According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, Buddhas are able to create physical emanations in order to benefit sentient beings. These emanations are called "form bodies." The "truth body" is said to be the result of a Buddha's actualization of final awakening.
26 See Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* pp. 67–68.
27 Ibid., pp. 106 and 108.
28 *sNgags rim chen mo,* p. 19a.8. Translation by Hopkins, in Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* p. 126.
29 Ibid., p. 63.
30 Ibid., p. 68.

31 Ibid., pp. 64–65. The Dalai Lama states that just meditation on a divine body that is not linked to emptiness is not sufficient, since the wisdom element is not complete. Also, just meditating on emptiness is not sufficient, since the method aspect is not complete. Though the *sūtra* vehicle sets out paths for the cultivation of Buddhahood after countless eons, by itself it cannot achieve this, since it lacks specific paths for attaining a form body (ibid., p. 65). Tantra uses the desired effect as the path in that a path similar to the result (that is, Buddhahood) is cultivated. According to the Dalai Lama, without deity yoga tantra is impossible, since deity yoga is the essence of tantra (ibid., p. 68).

32 According to Tsong kha pa, the main features of deity yoga are blissfulness and the indivisibility of method and wisdom (ibid., p. 119). With such a yoga of method and wisdom in which one cultivates the pride of a Buddha such as Vairocana, one attains Buddhahood without the passage of a long period of time (as is required in the *sūtra* vehicle), and he contends that this is the "greatness" of the tantra path (ibid., p. 119).

33 See in particular, Bu ston rin chen grub, "Condensed General Presentation of the Tantra Sets, Key Opening the Door to the Precious Treasury of Tantra Sets" *(rGyud sde spyi'i rnam bzhag bsdus pa rgyud sde rin po che'i gter sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig;* Tibetan Tripiṭaka, vol. 14, pp. 854.1–859.1; vol. 15, pp. 6.1–32.5 and 614.7–641.7).

34 See, for instance, Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* p. 115.

35 Ibid., pp. 173–174 and 39–42.

36 These paths are correlated with the six perfections and the ten bodhisattva levels (mentioned previously) and, like the bodhisattva levels, represent a hierarchical schema through which one progresses toward the final goal of Buddhahood.

37 For example Bu ston and kLong chen rab 'byams pa (1308–1363). For other formulations by Tibetan writers on the question of the differences between *sūtra* and tantra, see David Jackson, *Enlightenment by a Single Means* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akadémie der Wissenschaften, 1994), pp. 30ff. Like Tsong kha pa, other Tibetan writers of his time used the technique of differentiating *sūtra* and tantra as a device to put forward their own visions of tantra and to refute rival opinions.

38 Ibid., p. 57.

39 Tsong kha pa, *Tantra in Tibet,* pp. 124–125.

40 Ibid., p. 167.

41 He makes this point in several places in the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra,* as well as in his commentary on Asaṅga's "Chapter on Ethics."

42 *Lam gyi rim pa mdo tsam du bstan pa,* p. 162b.3–4. See also p. 161a, where he states that the path to Buddhahood is like climbing a ladder and that one must move upward one rung at a time. The lower levels, he asserts, are essential for successfully attaining the higher levels.

43 This is considered by the dGe lugs pa tradition to be one of Tsong kha pa's four "great deeds."

44 See Stephen Kent, "A Sectarian Interpretation of the Rise of Mahāyāna," and Graeme MacQueen, "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism,"*Religion,* vols 11 and 12, 1981, pp. 303–319 and 49–65.

10
A NOTE ON THE TERM "CITTA-MĀTRA" IN THE SANSKRIT *LAṄKĀVATĀRA* SŪTRA[1]

Reginald A.Ray

Introduction

The term *citta-mātra,* often translated as "mind only," plays an important role in Indian and extra-Indian Buddhist history. In the thought of the Indian Madhyamaka,[2] for example, *citta-mātra* is typically understood to represent the view that while external objects have no self-nature *(svabhāva)* and thus do not truly exist, the mind (understood as consciousness, *vijñāna)*[3] does have a self-nature and does truly exist.[4] According to this "idealistic" understanding, then, this substantial mind is the source of the entire external world.[5] This position represents, so it is argued, an intermediate stage between the "Hīnayāna" *Abhidharma,* wherein both external phenomena and the mind truly exist, and the highest position of the Madhyamaka where both external phenomena and the mind are seen to be empty *(śūnya)* of self-nature *(svabhāva).* Tibetan tradition tends to accept this "idealistic" interpretation of *citta-mātra (Tibetan: sems tsam),* such that the term designates, according to the Tibetan view, one of the four main doctrinal schools of Indian Buddhism which include the Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Citta-mātra, and Madhyamaka. In this scheme, the Citta-mātra is, again, defined as postulating a *svabhāva* to the *citta* or "mind" and seeing the entire world as a projection *of citta,* a position that is understood to be transcended by the Madhyamaka.[6]

These Indian and Tibetan interpretations are not entirely satisfying because they tend to lump into one category a number of different traditions and lines of thought, including *sūtras* as divergent as the *Saṃdhinirmocana*, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and the *Daśabhūmika,* and commentaries as far removed from one another as the *Mahayānasaṃgraha* and the *Ratnagotravibhāga.*[7] This raises the obvious question as to whether, or to what extent, these various texts represent the view of Citta-mātra, as defined above. One way to resolve this issue is to return to the sources classified as Citta-mātra, and attempt to see freshly how this term (or terms that may be judged equivalent in meaning) are used in them and to what extent this usage corresponds to the Madhyamaka definitions and interpretations. Once this issue is resolved, on a case-by-case basis, then the question can be raised of the accuracy of the stereotyped definition of Citta-mātra. Certainly it is ironic that the term *citta-mātra* plays no major role in the majority of texts which are classified as Citta-mātra. The term does not appear at all in the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, supposedly the root text of Citta-mātra,[8] and seems to appear only incidentally in other

sūtras classified as Citta-mātra such as the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*.[9] Beyond that, the term plays no significant role in the so-called five *dharmas* of Maitreya, or in the works of Asanga,[10] Vasubandhu,[11] or Sthiramati, all of whom are retrospectively known as Citta-mātra masters.[12] This is very curious and raises the question of where the term, as a designation for a major school of Buddhist thought, may have come from and why it is applied to texts in which it does not figure.

Be that as it may, there is at least one important text where the term *citta-mātra* not only appears significantly, but stands in a central position, namely the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (hereinafter *Las*), a Mahāyāna āna *sūtra* under development in the first centuries of our era by Buddhist forest renunciants or yogins.[13] It would be interesting, then, to examine the precise meaning of *citta-mātra* in this text, with the ultimate objective of determining, at least in this one case, the appropriateness of the Indian and Tibetan Madhyamaka interpretations.[14] An examination of the *Las* will be of particular interest for two reasons: first, the text has been classified by Buddhism as a work of the Citta-mātra or idealistic orientation;[15] second, in Willis' words, "the *[Las]* is often singled out as a Mahāyāna *sūtra*…which straightforwardly propounds universal absolute idealism" and "makes a much more categorical statement of absolute idealism than any of the other works commonly associated with the Yogācāra."[16] Surely here, if anywhere, the Madhyamaka definition should fit.

1 The terms *citta* and *citta-mātra* in the *Las*

A. Citta *as the conditioned mind*

In order to arrive at a correct understanding of the meaning of *citta-mātra* ("*citta* or 'mind' only") in the *Las*, it is first necessary to ascertain the way in which the text understands the term *citta*. Briefly put, the *Las* uses the term *citta* to refer, on the one hand, to the relative mind, based on causes and conditions and, on the other, to a *"citta,"* as yet to be defined, which is not conditioned, but ultimate. First, then, *citta* indicates the conditioned mind which arises based on causes, and is deluded [10.7 (22)].[17] In the *Las*, this conditioned mind is described as made up of seven consciousnesses including: (1) the five sense consciousnesses, each of which has its corresponding sense organ *(indriya)* and sense objects *(viṣaya)*; (2) the sixth consciousness, *mano-vijñāna*, which has consciousness as its organ and data of the five sense consciousnesses as its objects; and (3) the seventh consciousness, *manas*, where the dualistic world of *saṃsāra* is discriminated. *Citta* as designating the seven consciousnesses is thus "the mind that is born by virtue of conditions" *(pratyayair-janitaṃ cittam)* [113.32 (234)]. It is the mind that is caused by absence of wisdom *(ajñāna)*, and by thirst *(tṛṣṇā)* and *karma* [110.23 (230)]. It is this mind that has evolved from clinging *(abhiniveśa)* [114.3–4 (234)]. This *citta* is ignorant, for there is no awareness of its own conditioned character [20.20–22 (40)], and it is separated from realization [113.31 (234)]. It is this *citta*, finally, that disappears upon liberation [110.28 (230); 117.2 (237)].

B. Citta *as an ultimate*

The *Las* also uses the term *citta* to indicate an ultimate, entirely disjunct from the process of *saṃsāric* knowing implied by the relative *citta* [19.2 1ff. (38)]. This ultimate *citta* stands independent from the process of hypostatization[18] or wrong conceptualization *(parikalpita),* and from the dualism of subject *(grāhaka)* and object *(grāhya)* [19.2 1ff. (38)]. It is, in other words, not dualistic *(na…cittam dvi-lakṣaṇam* [144.21 (268)]). *Citta* in this ultimate sense plays one or another of three different roles in the *Las*. First, it can refer to a pre-existing "ground," without which sentient experience, as such, would be impossible. Second, it can be viewed in a "path" perspective, as that unbiased awareness that is cultivated through meditation practice which, in turn, makes spiritual development and transformation possible. Finally, it can indicate the "fruition" stage of the realization of a fully enlightened Buddha. In each of these cases, it is the same ultimate *citta* that is referred to, and its specific function depends on the relationship to it of sentient beings. The character of *citta* as an ultimate, functioning in this threefold sense, is further clarified by some of the more important synonyms given for it in the *Las*.[19] These may most conveniently be ordered according to the categories of ground, path, or fruition.

(1) Ultimate citta *as ground*

ālaya-vijñāna: citta is identified with the "eighth consciousness," the *ālaya-vijñāna* [21.12 (42)]—*"citta is* the *alaya-vijñāna"* [114.5–6 (234)]. Here it functions as the precondition of experience itself. That the *ālaya* represents the *citta* free from causes and conditions (although it is the receptacle or container of karmic traces, *vasanas* [see below]) is seen in its being identified with the *dharma-kāya* [20.12 (40)].[20]

b *tathāgata-garbha: the* ultimate *citta* is also identified with the *tathāgata-garbha*, the womb or embryo of the Buddha [8.6 (18)]: "the *citta*, which is inherently luminous, is the auspicious *garbha* of the *tathāgata" (prakṛti-prabhāsvaram cittaṃ garbhaṃ tathāgataṃ śubham)* [156.23–4 (282)].[21] In this role, it acts as the potentiality for full enlightenment within each sentient being. The *Las* provides a detailed definition of the ulti-mate *citta* as *tathāgata-garbha* in chapter two, where it is said to be essentially luminous *(prakṛti-prabhāsvara),* pure *(viśuddhi),* primordially pure *(adiviśuddha),* eternal *(nitya),* stable *(dhruva),* auspicious *(śiva),* and unchanging *(śāśvata)* [33.10–15 (68–9)].[22]

(2) Ultimate citta *in its path function*

The Buddhas have taught the path of meditation *(yoga)* [148.22–3 (271)], through which one withdraws into the forest or some other deserted spot [129.16–17 (253)], holds one's body upright [130.11–12 (254)], and carries out the practice 162.13–14 (290)]. Through meditation practice is made possible the transition from a state wherein the ultimate *citta* is mere poten-tial *(tathāgata-garbha),* to the conditioned where it is realized (as fruition). The path, it would seem, provides experiences of *citta* in its fruition aspect, in the forms of (a) *prajñā* (through stainless *prajñā* [65.1–3 (137)][23] one gains realization [64.23 and

25 (136)]) and (b) *jnāna* (wisdom is spoken of in two ways: first, in reference to what is known (phenomena, *dharmas),* it is the wisdom of the egolessness of *dharmas (dharma-nairatmya-jñāna)* [29.29 (61)]; second, in reference to knowing, it is the *sva-pratyātma-arya-jñāna,* the tran-scendent wisdom that is self-known [1.11 (4); 64.10 (136)]).[24]

(3) Ultimate citta *as fruition*

a *nirābhāsa,* “imagelessness”: referring to the state of mind of the realized person, a condition in which one perceives things directly, without the mediation of conceptual recognition or interpretation of any kind. Thus we read that “the sphere of imagelessness *(nirābhāsa-gocaram)* is devoid of birth, existing, and destruction *(utpāda-sthiti-bhaṅga-varjyant)*, and is in accord with the arising of the (ultimate) *citta* itself *(svacittotpādānu-gataṃ)*,” [19.24(38)].

b *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva:* the “fully perfected nature,” representing the attain-ment of the ultimate *citta.* Thus we are told that that the *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* is the essence of the *tathāgata-garbha* [29.14–15 (60)].[25]

c *dharma-kāya:* equated with the *ālaya* [20.12 (40)].

d *tathāgata-kāya* (“the body of the ‘thus-arrived’”, the Buddha): which is disjunct from the *citta-(relative)-mano-manvijñāna* [19.29–32 (39)].

e *nirvāṇa: nirvāṇa* is the ultimate *citta* attained, that is, it is *citta* as the *ālaya,* when realization has occurred [27.6 (55)].

(4) Another synonym: sva-citta

Other synonyms are given for the ultimate *citta* which do not tie it specifically to one of the above functional positions. One of the most important of these is *sva-citta*. This term can, of course, indicate the mind of a particular individual, “his *citta*” (that is, conditioned *citta*), but in the context of the *Las*, it virtually always refers to the ultimate *citta* as such. In this case, *“sva”* may be glossed as “without reference to another,”[26] indicating not the mind of a specific subject, but rather the *citta* itself, as a self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-radiant source of reality (not based on causes and conditions), thus the translation *“citta* itself,”[27] indicating the ultimate *citta* untouched by any substantialization.

As the preceding synonyms suggest, the ultimate *citta* is not a thing among other things, but rather the fact of awareness itself, non-dualistic and non-referential. It is the unbiased and unlimited field of awareness within which all persons *(pudgala)* and things *(dharmas)* are known to be empty of selfhood *(nairatmya)* [10.15 (22–3)]. Thus in a key identification, the self-*nature (svabhāva)* of the *citta* is said to be egolessness *(nairatmya)*. The ultimate *citta* is also pure *(amala),* disjunct from views *(dṛṣṭi)* [1.24 (5)], entirely disjoined from conceptualization *(vikalpa), pratyaya* (causes), and destruction *(vinivṛtti)* [19–22–3 (38)]. Thus the ultimate *citta* is not *a dharma* of *saṃsāra*, is utterly non-substantial, and is to be understood as the wisdom of a Buddha [25.26 (52)].[28] But if the ultimate *citta* is really non-substantial, how is it that the term *svabhāva,* which, at least within the Madhyamaka frame of reference seems to say something quite different, is applied to it, in the passage just cited, and in another of its

parinispanna-svabhāva? Let us recall that we have already noted in the *Las* the paradoxical use of language, wherein one and the same term, *citta,* can indicate one or another of two quite distinct orders of being.[29] In the term *svabhāva,* we see another example of the same phenomenon. On the one hand, in the *Las, svabhāva* indicates the substantial "self-nature" which is imputed to phenomena of the conditioned world, but which in fact have no substantial being, are *svabhāva-śūnya,* empty of self-nature. On the other, as in *parinispanna-svabhāva,* the term can also designate the "character" of the realized state, which is explicitly said to be the one authentic *svabhāva* taught by the Buddha [109.3 (228)]. As we shall presently see, this paradoxical use of language is important in the *Las* as a whole.

In light of the consistent and oft-repeated affirmation of the non-substantialistic character of the ultimate *citta,* its translation as "mind," with its substantialistic connotations, is clearly unsatisfactory. Such a rendering makes sense for *citta* in its relative, but not in its ultimate, sense. *Citta* derives from the Sanskrit verbal root *cit,* which means not only "to think," but more fundamentally "to observe" or "to perceive." Similarly the substantive *citta* may mean "mind or heart" in a conditioned and substantial sense, but also, much less substantially, "noticing," "observing," or even just "being aware" [MW 195.3], and not necessarily in a *saṃsāric* sense. This, in fact, is the way the term *citta* is most frequently used in the *Las,* as awareness and, moreover, an awareness expunged of all dualistic operations. This suggests that, rather than translating the ultimate *citta* as "mind," a far more accurate rendering would be something like "non-dualistic awareness" or simply "awareness," reserving the translation "mind" for *citta* understood in a conditioned sense.[30]

C. Citta-mātra *in the* Las

It is within this context that the term *citta-mātra* appears, as another central way of indicating the ultimate *citta.* Like *sva-citta, citta-mātra,* "awareness only" or, better, "pure awareness," refers specifically to the ultimate *citta,* but with particular emphasis on its freedom from duality and hypostatization ("nothing but awareness"). *Citta-mātra,* we are told, "has nothing to do with the [relative] *citta* born of conditions" *(pratyayair janitaṃ cittaṃ cittamātraṃ na yujyate)* [113.32 (234)]. The non-substantiality of the *citta-mātra* is frequently affirmed by the *Las: "Citta-mātra* is disjunct from being *(bhava)* and non-being *(abhava),* it is free from the [relative] mind" [63.1–2 (133)]. In this sense, in another key identification, *citta-mātra* is explicitly said to be *śūnyatā:* the Buddha says, "*śūnyatā*…I name *citta-mātra" (śūnyatā:…citta-mātram vadamy-aham)* [63.3–4 (133)]. Like the term *citta, citta-mātra* in the *Las* also appears in the specific contexts of ground, path, and fruition.

(1) Citta-mātra *as ground*

The ultimate *citta* as pure awareness is the basis *saṃsāric* experience, and it is *citta-mātra* itself that is conceptualized as the dualistic world of subject and object. Thus the *Las* says:

pudgalaḥ saṃtatiḥ skandhāḥ pratyayā anavasthathā/
pradhānamīsvaraḥ kartā cittamātraṃ vikalpyate//

[34.2–3 (70)]

(As person, continuity, *skandhas,* causality, atoms, the supreme lord, the creator, is *citta-mātra* conceptualized.)[31]

(2) Citta-mātra *as path*

Those bodhisattvas who would realize the *tathāgata-kāya* should [exercise themselves] in accord with the truth of the *citta-mātra (citta-mātra-anusārin)* [20.1–3 (39)]. When they do so, they experience a revulsion *(parāvṛtti),* a turning back, in which they see that the apparent world does not exist in and of itself, but is ultimately nothing but pure awareness, incorrectly understood.

(3) Citta-mātra *as fruition*

They then experience the ultimate truth of *citta-mātra,* that the three worlds are nothing other than pure awareness, nothing in themselves *(niḥsvabhāva),* nothing but (unreal) objectifications of pure awareness (which itself, as *śūnyatā,* does not conform to the definition of "existence"). Thus *citta-mātra* is equated with the cessation of all views *(sarva-dṛṣṭi)* [125.26 (249)] and with the imagelessness *(nirābhāsa)* of the realized yogin [66.14 (140)]. *Citta-mātra,* as the fruition of the Buddhist path, is also explicitly identified with a number of other important "fruition" terms of Mahāyāna Buddhism:

tathatā-śūnyatā-koṭi nirvāṇam dharmadhātukam/
kāyaṃ mano-mayaṃ cittraṃ citta-mātram vadāmy-aham//

[63.3–4(133)]

(As thusness, emptiness, the (reality) limit, *nirvāṇa,* the realm of reality *(dharma-dhātu),* As various forms of the mind-made body, do I speak of "awareness only.")[32]

2 The evolution of *saṃsāra* and how it is transcended

A. The evolution of saṃsāra

In the *Las,* these usages of *citta* and *citta-mātra* are set within the larger frame of the descriptions of the way in which *saṃsāra* comes about, and the method by which it is overcome. As already seen, duality *(dvaya), saṃsāra,* comes about through hypostatization [7.22–6 (17)]. Through this process, *citta*—though itself without substance—is literally thought to have a self-nature. Thus "[ultimate] *citta* is grasped by [relative] *citta*" *(cittena gṛhyatecittaṃ)* [114.1 (234)] and "by means of clinging to the [ultimate] *citta* itself, the [relative] *citta* is produced" [114.3 (234)]. This is sometimes

referred to as *prapañca,* "false discrimination," which indicates discursive thinking that takes things for substantial realities [20.4 (39)]. It is also termed *parikalpita-svabhāva,* the "hypostatizated nature," first of the three *svabhāvas*. It is this process that is termed *pravṛtti*, "evolution," whereby an apparently existing dualistic world, with internal and external poles, seems to come about and seems to exist [7.22–26 (17)]. The (ultimate) *citta* appears as (relative) mind (within) and external forms *(rūpin)* without. Thus the *ālaya* is conceptualized into subject (*grāhaka*, literally "grasper") and object (*grāhya*, literally, "that which is to be grasped"), although it is utterly apart from them *(visaṃyukta)* [19.24 (38)]. Thus the seven consciousnesses arise.[33]

In this process, the operation of the conditioned *vijñānas* may be thought of as twofold, corresponding to *khyāti-vijñāna* or perceiving consciousness and *vastu-prativikalpa-vijñāna,* or object discriminating consciousness. From the operation of these two comes the apparently existing dualistic world [18.6 (33)]. The precise way in which the world evolves and precisely what it seems to be are governed according to the karmic traces, called *vāsanās,* retained in the *ālaya*. These *vāsanās* have been created by previous hypostatization, through misconceiving the *citta-mātra* as dualistic reality [25.15ff. (51)]. This process involves an ignoring of the true nature of the ultimate *citta* or awareness, which is essentially non-discriminative and non-discriminable [8.5–6 (17)]. The driving force behind this turning away is attachment, *abhiniveśa* [8.11 (18)]. Thus we are told that it is from attachment to the true reality *(dharmatā)* of the manifestations *(dṛśya)* of ultimate *citta* itself *(sva-citta)* that the apparently existing, multiplicitous world of duality evolves *(pravṛtti)* into the relative *citta* [8.11–15 (18)]. This and no other manifestation *(dṛśya)* is hypostatized *(vikalpyate)* by the ignorant [112.1–2 (232)].

A number of similes are used to illustrate the movement from pure awareness into an apparently existing substantial world. According to one such simile, this process is like a single seed (the non-hypostatizing, non-conceptualizable *citta*), from which grow up "stems, shoots, knots, leaves, petals, flowers, fruit, branches" (the apparently self-existing, multiplicitous world) [8.3–4 (17)]. Thus from this one "source," by virtue of ignorance mistakenly construing, there grows up a world with external *(bāhya)* and internal *(ādhyātmika)* components [8.5–6 (17)]. Thus from the one characteristic *(lakṣaṇa)* of the *citta (vijñāna)*[34] (that is, *śūnyatā*), there evolves everything that apparently exists, up to and including the entire triple world itself.

B. The undoing of saṃsāra

Essential to the ultimate *citta*'s nature is that it cannot be stained or compromised. Even when it is covered over by impure concepts [113.3–4 (245)], even when it is misunderstood as the relative *citta,* it remains pure. Thus we read that the ultimate *citta* in itself cannot undergo evolution, for it cannot be conceptualized *(na tasya vidyate vṛttiḥ svacittaṃ grāhyavarjitam),* "there is no evolution [*vṛtti* for *pravṛtti*] of it [the ultimate *citta*], for the *citta* in itself is disjunct from grasping [that is, it cannot be grasped by discursive thought]" [21.24–5 (42)]. This point is spelled out when Mahāmati asks the Buddha why, on the one hand, he says that *citta* gives birth to discrimination and, on the other, that it does not. The Blessed One replies that, seen from

a realized viewpoint, there is essentially no evolution of conceptualization concerning being and non-being, and an external world; there is always just pure awareness *(citta-mātra)*. However, for the benefit of deluded beings, one talks as if there were an evolution of the *citta,* because they in fact misperceive the matter to be so, and they must be given a way to correct their misperception [62.2ff. (131)].

For the *Las,* the purity of the *citta,* even when it is seemingly enmeshed within *saṃsāra,* provides the basis of the path. The *citta,* in its ultimate form, remains hidden within experience: like a priceless gem wrapped in a dirty garment, the ultimate *citta* is hidden within the covering of the *skandhas, dhātus,* and *āyatanas* [33.12–13 (68–9)]. Yet because the ultimate *citta* remains pure and unstained, it is possible to uncover it through praxis: one must withdraw into the "forest" and, following the oral instructions *(upadeśa)* on practice *(yoga),* engage in intensive meditation.[35] Meditation, then, provides the point of transition, of transformation, whereby one may exit the delusion of *saṃsāra* and enter the realm of awakening.

This enables us to understand another curious feature of the *Las* already mentioned. Unlike the classical Yogācāra, the *Las,* as we have seen, uses the same term—*citta*—to refer simultaneously (and paradoxically) to delusion and enlightenment. This dual usage of the term is deliberate and, in fact, provides the precondition for the efficacy of the meditative path advocated in the *Las*. At the beginning of the path, the ultimate *citta* is hidden from view, having been obscured by the relative *citta,* in the form of hypostatizations of all kinds. However, the relative *citta* is nothing other than the ultimate misperceived and, by seeing that the relative *citta* is essentially inexistent, one comes to see that the relative is finally nothing other than the ultimate *citta*. This realization is attained through the practice of Buddhist meditation: one takes the phenomena of one's (relative) mind as the object of one's practice and, by attending mindfully to these relative phenomena,[36] one comes to see them freshly and clearly, and realizes them to be nothing other than pure awareness itself. Of course this statement telescopes what may be a lifetime of gradual maturation, but it shows clearly the essential point: what shifts is not one's object of meditation so much as what one is able to see in it.

C. The attainment of realization

The practice of meditation effects a revolution of the basis *(aśraya-parāvṛtti),* wherein one comes to a direct realization of the emptiness of all phenomena [cf., e.g., 112.9–170 (232)]. In realizing their emptiness, one sees that they are unborn, that they are nothing other than mental fabrications, which have nothing other than pure awareness *(citta-mātra)* as their ultimate nature. Thus "the *citta* liberated is eternal *(nitya),* unchanging *(śāśvata),* reality *(tattva),* the essence *(gotra),* the self-nature of objective reality *(vastu-svabhāvaka)*" [123.27–8 (246)]. This is the realization of the "one (authentic) self-nature" *(svabhāvaṃ ekaṃ)* taught by the Buddha, the *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva.* Unlike the substantial self-nature of which all *dharmas* are empty, this *svabhāva* is disjunct from logic *(tarka)* and concepts *(vijñapti),* and is the divine realm of the enlightened saints *(ārya)*. Significantly, this *svabhāva* is also separated from the (other) two *svabhāvas* *(svabhāva-dvaya-varjitaṃ)* [109.3–4 (228)]. "In the penetration of realized insight *(buddhi),*[37] there is neither *(pari)kalpita* nor *(para)tantra;* where *(pari)niṣpanna* is, there

is no existent…" [54.15–16 (114)]. And, "The state of *pariniṣpanna* is disjunct from being and non-being; Where there is liberation from being and non-being, how could these two *svabhāvas* be?" [54.17–18 (114)]. We shall return to this particular definition of the relation of *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* to *paratantra-* and *parikalpita-svabhāva* below.

Further clarification of *citta* and *citta-mātra* is given in the *Las'* emphasis on realization as *sva pratyātma-ārya-jñāna,* the transcendent wisdom that is self-known [1.11 (4)], explicitly identified with the *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* and the essence of the *tathāgata-garbha* *(tathāgata-garbha-hṛdaya)* [29.14–15 (60)], the ultimate *citta* attained.[38] Just as *citta* and *citta-mātra* do not refer to an introverted state, but rather awareness uncompromised by duality, so the term *pratyātma* does not mean a subjective knowledge,[39] but rather a knowledge that is qualitatively different from the ordinary, dependent kind. It is, in effect, a realization that does not come about based on the operation of the eighteen *dhātus,* but rather arises as spontaneously and directly known, that is, independent of any external or conditioning factors. This is what it means to say that it is *pratyātma,* self(-known), and to speak of *pratyātma-dharmata-śuddha,* the purity of the self(-known) reality *(dharmatā)* [4.6 (8)].[40] Thus the *sva pratyātma-ārya-jñāna* is "the unthinkable"; it is the eternal *(nitya),* it is ultimate truth *(paramārtha-[satya])* [26.13–14 (53)].

Enlightenment is described in the *Las* not only in terms of the wisdom of realization itself, but also in terms of "what is seen." Thus awakening may be described as *sva-citta-dṛśya-mātra,* seeing "nothing but the manifestation of the (ultimate) *citta* itself" [71.24 (152)] and *svacitta-dṛśya-mātra,* "the true reality of the manifestations of *citta* itself" [8.11–15 (18)]. One sees the manifestations of the *citta,* the world of duality, but sees them as nothing other than pure awareness. This is defined as a realization which literally cannot be imagined, in which "experience" is purged entirely of any notions of self-existence *(svabhāva),* but does not simply disappear either. The same point is expressed in an analogy used several times in the *Las,* namely that of the ocean and its waves. The *ālaya* is compared to the ocean, and the seven consciousnesses to its waves. The ocean of the *ālaya,* when stirred by the wind of the *viṣayas* (sense experience), gives birth to the waves of the seven consciousnesses. When the world is evolved *(pravṛtti),* the seven consciousnesses seem to be entirely separate and different from the *ālaya*. However, when the truth of *citta-mātra* is seen, one realizes that the relation of the seven consciousnesses to the *ālaya* is like that between the waves and the ocean: the waves are seen to be nothing other than of the nature of the ocean itself [20.11–22 (40); 21.5–22.6 (41–3)].[41]

Thus it is that the entire triple world *(traidhātukam),* with its inner subjective realm and its external objects, is nothing other than pure awareness *(citta-mātra)* which has been mistakenly construed to be an independently existing, dualistic reality [34.11 (71)]. This awareness is, moreover, uncontaminated by any substantialization, and that it is why it is called "*pure* awareness" *(citta-mātra).*[42] Thus both the outer, "objective," and inner, "subjective," worlds are illusions *(māyā),* in the precise sense that they do not exist as they seem to, as dualistic, independently existing and substantial. At the same time, however, it is not appropriate to deny any claim for them at all, to identify them with utter non-existence, which would amount to nihilism, for both internal and external

worlds are of the nature of pure awareness *(citta-mātra).* Thus realization involves the state where nothing external to (or more than) the *citta* is seen *(citta-bāhya-adarśanatā)* [19.27 (38)]. In liberation, it is realized that both inner and outer worlds are conceptualizations, driven by ignorance, of the manifestations of awareness itself *(svacitta-dṛśya-vikalpa)* [20.22 (40)]. Once this is fully realized, one is able to abide within, as pure awareness *(citta-mātra).*[43]

In the state of pure awareness *(citta-mātra),* then, of realization, there is neither exaggeration *(samāropa)* nor minimization *(apavāda).*[44] In the *Las, samāropa* (literally "attributing") refers to the attribution of a relative self-nature *(svabhāva)* to things *(dharmas)* when in fact they have none (eternalism). *Apavāda* (literally "denying," "contradicting") indicates the insistence that all things are absolutely non-existent (nihilism). *Samāropa* wants to attribute to things which appear, but are empty, more reality than they possess. *Apavāda* wants to deny to things even their appearance, their nature as pure awareness.[45] If the enlightened, through their realization of *citta-mātra,* strike a middle way between exaggeration and minimization, the unenlightened, fall into the extremes: "those ignorant ones who do not know the body, enjoyments, abode, as [the ultimate] *citta,* wander about in exaggeration and minimization."

As seen above, the *Las* describes realization as seeing the absence of selfnature *(niḥsvabhāva)* of existence *(bhava)* [112.9–10 (232)]. In this context, like other Buddhist yogic traditions, the *Las* wants particularly to steer clear of nihilism: the *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* should not maintain the thesis *(pratijñā)* that all phenomena are unborn *(anutpanna),* empty *(śūnya),* and without self-nature *(asvabhāva)* [68.10 (144)]. Maintaining such a thesis (as opposed, of course, to realizing it) would amount to utterly denying the ultimate nature of phenomena as pure awareness and falling into the nihilistic extreme. Instead, it should be held that all things are like *māyā* or like a dream *(svapna),* for they are perceived, and yet they are not perceived [68.10 (144)]. What is meant here is clarified when the *Las* comments further on the world as *māyā*. We have already seen that this indicates that the world has no self-nature *(svabhāva).* Now, the *Las* continues, this also means that the world does not not exist either for "*māyā* is not non-being *(nāsti),* because it has the appearance of reality *(sādharmya-darśanāt)*" [45.23 (95) and 46.4 (96)]. Thus we read that "all these *dharmas* are unborn but, for all that, they are not non-existent; they are like a creation of *māyā,* like a dream, like a city of the Gandharvas" [116.29–30 (237)].[46]

The *skandhas,* with *vijñāna* as the fifth, are like the reflection of trees in water; they are to be seen as *māyā* or a dream; by means of concepts do not hypostatize [39.27–8 (83)].[47]

The realization of *citta-mātra,* then, does not involve the annihilation of sense objects *(viṣaya)* and their sense fields *(indriya),* and it is only the ignorant who think that it does [26.4–6 (55)].

In this sense, the *Las* can speak of "a world beyond discursive thought" *(evam acintyo 'sau viṣayaḥ)* [7.4 (15)]. It can also talk of "seeing" a "conditioned" *(saṃskṛta)* which stands free from qualified and qualifying:

> *lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-nirmuktaṃ yadā paśyati saṃskṛtam/*
> *vidhūtaṃ hi bhavettena svacittam paśyato jagat//*

> (When one sees the conditioned free from qualified and qualifying, then by this [concepts] are shaken off and the world is seen [as it truly is] as mind itself. [124.9–10 (246)])

Similarly we read "when one sees the conditioned free from dependent and depending" *(ālamba-alambya-vigataṃ yadā paśyati saṃskṛtam)*, it is this precisely that is *citta-mātra* *(niścitam cittamātraṃ hi)*[62.21–2 (132)].[48] In reference to the just cited analogy of the ocean *(ālaya)* and its waves (seven *vijñānas*), the question is asked: Why does the intellect not recognize the ultimate *citta* in its evolved state? The implication is clear that for a realized person, what appears to the unrealized person as manifest existents (waves) does not utterly disappear in realization but is rather recognized to be nothing other than *citta-mātra,* pure awareness (the ocean). Thus we are explicitly told that "as the waves appear simultaneously[49] with the ocean, or (images appear) in a mirror or dream, so the (ultimate) *citta* is reflected in its own sense-fields."[50] This is the reality *(tattvam)* that is not found in the (relative) mind *(citte tattvaṃ na vidyate)*[22.4 (43)]. It is this world that is meant when the text talks about the "exalted[51] objective reality" *(ārya-bhava-vastu)* [67.10 (142)], "self-nature of exalted objective reality" *(ārya-vastu-svabhāva)* [67.11 (142)], and the "objective reality of thusness" *(tathatā-vastu)* [60.8 (127)] that is seen by the realized ones.

The preceding suggests that our translation of *citta-mātra* as pure awareness, while in many cases adequate, may in certain other instances be better rendered as "pure appearance."[52] *Citta-mātra* as "pure awareness" refers to the state of mind of a subject, "beyond thought," while *citta-mātra* as "pure appearance" refers to a "world" that is equally "beyond thought." At the same time, however, it must be recognized that "pure awareness" and "pure appearance" are not differentiable, and this is why *citta-mātra* is used equally to refer to both. Thus it is that what sees and what is seen are not different, not two. This is an attempt, then, not to reduce object to subject, as the traditional Madhyamaka interpretation would assert, but rather to point toward the transcendence of categories of self and world, subject and object, seer and seen, of duality itself, in the awakened state: "for those who see, grasping *(grāha)* [subject] and that which is grasped *(grāhya)* [object] cease" [117.20–1 (238)]. The *Las* implicitly argues, it thus seems, that if one is not willing to point to a pure appearance of some sort (so to speak), one falls into the solipsism of a pure subjectivism, while if one is not willing to point to an awareness, free from duality, one falls into the nihilism of denying enlightenment itself. Clearly, such talk of polarity beyond self-nature, substantiality, and dualism brings us to the limits of language itself.

As we have seen repeatedly, the *Las* holds that all existents *(dharmas)* are without self-nature *(svabhāva),* empty *(śūnya),* and illusory (like *māyā*). Therefore there should be no mistake that, in the *Las'* view, the ultimate *citta,* whether as "awareness" or as "pure appearance," is not existent either. Nevertheless, the *Las* acknowledges that its manner of speaking may be misunderstood. This is clarified when Mahāmati asks the Buddha whether his doctrine of *tathāgata-garbha* (including, of course, *citta, citta-mātra,* and their synonyms) is not the same as the heretics' *(tīrthakara)* doctrine of self *(ātman).* The Buddha replies that this most certainly is not the meaning of his doctrine, for the *tathāgata-garbha* that he and all *tathāgatas* teach is "emptiness *(śūnyatā),* the limit of

reality *(bhūta-koṭi),* and *nirvāṇa,* unborn *(utpāda),* signless *(animitta),* and wishless *(apraṇihita)* [33.17 (69)]. In fact the Buddha teaches this doctrine, as he teaches all others, to help beings.[53]

Finally, the realization of *citta-mātra,* of pure awareness/pure appearance, has world-redeeming implications, for it brings about the ultimate transformation in which selfless compassion, and the powers by which it may be effectuated, are released. Thus we read,

> When those born of the *jina* see the world *(loka)* as pure awareness *(citta-mātra),* Then they will obtain the body of transformation *(nairmāṇika-kāya),* disjunct from karma producing *(saṃskāra)* actions *(kriyā),* And endowed with the powers *(bala),* the super-knowledges[54] *(abhijñās)* and the masteries *(vaśitas)…*
>
> [31.16–18(65)]

This same theme is repeated elsewhere, where we read that by entering into imagelessness which is awareness itself *(sva-citta),* one will attain the *tathāgata-kāya* "which is endowed with the powers *(bala),* the super-knowledges *(abhijñā),* the masteries *(vaśita),* sympathetic love *(kṛpā),* compassion *(karuṇā),* and [skillful] means *(upāya)*" [19.29–31 (39)]. In the end, of course, "the *samādhi* which is like *māyā,* the body made of mind *(kāyaṃ manomayaṃ),* the *abhijñā* and the *vaśitas* are the various powers *(bala)* of that [ultimate] awareness *(citta) (bala cittasya)*" [111.29–30 (231)].

Conclusion

The ultimate *citta,* in the *Las,* then, indicates the enlightened state of a Buddha and the compound *citta-mātra* represents an attempt to insist upon, and to protect, the ultimacy of this awakening. It is true that the *Las* uses the term *svabhāva* to refer to the ultimate *citta* but, as we have seen, one would have to distance oneself considerably from the world of the text to insist—as the Madhyamaka does—that this *svabhāva,* which is defined precisely as no (relative) *svabhāva,* represents the same kind of *svabhāva* of which all phenomena *(dharmas)* are empty. In fact, in some respects, the *Las* usage reminds one of nothing so much as the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* identification of *śūnyatā* as a *lakṣaṇa* ("characteristic").[55] *Citta-mātra, citta,* and *sva-citta* would thus appear to function analogously to other Buddhist designations of the ultimate, such as *tathāgata-garbha, prajñā, jñāna, dharma-kāya, tathāgata-kāya, nirvāṇa,* and *śūnyatā,* which—as words—could conceivably be understood to be substantives but, in their own proper context, are typically used to point toward a realization that transcends defiled *(saṃsāric)* cognition.

In fact, comparing the basic intentions of the *Las* with those of the Madhyamaka, one finds a great deal more continuity in descriptions of the goal of *nirvāṇa* than one would anticipate from the explicit Madhyamaka critique. For example, as suggested above, the *Las* is quite familiar with, and uses language reminiscent of, the Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka. Thus the terms *pudgala-nairātmya* and *dharma-nairātmya,* the notion that *dharmas* are without own being *(svabhāva),* unborn, non-existent, and unceasing, the

emptiness *(śūnyatā)* of all *dharmas,* the idea that realization involves the doing away with *prapañca,* all central to the Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka, are also all part of the basic stock in trade of the *Las*. In fact, when Nāgārjuna remarks that "the ontic range of *nirvāṇa* is the ontic range of the everyday world"[56] and "*nirvāṇa* is nothing but the ending of all reifying thought *(sarva-kalpana),*[57] he could just as easily be speaking as a yogin propounding the *Las*.

As we have seen, according to the *Las,* both the external world of objects and the internal world of the subject are conceptual creations, built upon and, in some sense, fashioned out of, pure awareness. In this system, the subject is no more real than the object and, in fact, both are empty *(śūnya)* of substantial existence *(svabhāva)*. In this the *Las* simply enunciates, in its own particular way, the basic teaching of the Prajñāpāramitā and other Mahāyāna āna schools. Its use of the term *citta* in the ultimate sense, as pure awareness/pure appearance, represents its own attempt to tread a middle path between eternalism and nihilism. The preceding would suggest then that, explicit polemics aside, the Madhyamaka and the *Las,* particularly in reference to the goal of *nirvāṇa*, understand the term *śūnyatā* in an analogous way. This, in turn, would seem to suggest that the term *citta-mātra* in the *Las* has rather little to do with the *"citta-mātra,"* as a conditioned and substantial mind, that is the object of the critique of the Indian Madhyamaka of Candrakirti, Śāntideva and others, and of their Tibetan followers.

It would be tempting to conclude that *citta-mātra* as depicted in the *Las* and the *citta-mātra* criticized by the Madhyamaka are disparate existent, historical traditions, that while the first may well represent a non-substantialistic orientation, the second reflects a school, now unknown to us, that did in fact make a conditioned reality its *summum bonum*. Without ruling out this possibility, let us consider a more likely, if more ambiguous situation. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the *citta-mātra* doctrine criticized by the Madhyamaka is in fact that of a tradition such as the *Las*. The question then becomes: what could have been the process by which the Madhyamaka arrived at its repudiation of such a *citta-mātra* tradition?

The proponent of Madhyamaka might respond to this question by saying that, while it may be granted that in the *Las'* perspective, the *citta* is empty *(śūnyatā),* the *Las* does not understand *śūnyatā* in the same manner as the Madhyamaka. In fact, a strict Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamika want to argue that the *Las'* application of *śūnyatā* to *citta,* rather than indicating the non-substantiality of the *citta,* in fact reveals an opposite tendency, namely the hypostatizing of *śūnyatā*, by making it into something positive. However, there are clearly two sides to the conversation, for the *Las* might respond—in line with its warning, noted above, against the danger of nihilism—that this kind of critique of its own understanding of *śūnyatā* runs the risk of hypostatizing *śūnyatā* in the opposite direction, by making it into a naught. Obviously, one way to resolve the tensions in this conversation is by adopting one or another of the espoused viewpoints. Since it is the applicability of the Madhyamaka critique that we are considering in this chapter, let us look at the matter from that angle. Thus one could, as Madhyamaka has done, simply apply the Madhyamaka viewpoint and method to the *citta-mātra* doctrine of the *Las,* and see what conclusions ensue. However, this in effect imposes an alien and reductionistic framework on the *Las,* making the *Las* little more than a victim of Madhyamaka dialectics, a kind of cog in the Madhyamaka machine. In such a case, the voice of the *Las* cannot be clearly heard, and its individuality and integrity are lost.

In support of this judgement, it may first be conceded that there are aspects of the Madhyamaka and *Las* use of the term *śūnyatā* that do seem to reflect basic differences. For example, the *Las* wants to use (ultimate) *citta* as a gloss of *śūnyatā*, something one would not anticipate from the Madhyamaka. However, such a difference can be understood when it is realized that it reflects, more than anything else, a difference in method. The Madhyamaka is primarily a tradition emerging in the context of settled monasticism, informed by a rich tradition of textual study, using philosophical analysis as its primary methodology, and preoccupied with engaging—and defeating—rival schools, both non-Buddhist and Buddhist, in debate. For the Madhyamaka, language purports to characterize reality and positive statements are, *eo ipso*, ontological in intent.

The proponents of the *Las* are clearly, by contrast, forest yogins for whom meditation provides the primary soteriological methodology and who seek, above all, direct, personal experience of *nirvāṇa*. For them, language clearly performs the very different function of expressing meditative states and particularly experiences of realization. When they speak, they do not intend to enunciate philosophical absolutes, but rather to use language to articulate moments of insight. The *Las* use of language is not logical as much as evocative and declaratory. One strand of Buddhist tradition may laud the "silence of the Buddha," perhaps implying that enlightened ones must inevitably refrain from speech. However, another equally prominent strand insists that enlightenment, inseparable as it is from compassion, must give rise to expression. For the logician, the highest expression of *śūnyatā* may indeed occur when all arguments are exhausted and the mind lapses into profound silence, but for the meditating yogin the most accurate expression of *śūnyatā* may well occur when he rises from the silence of his meditation and gives voice to his realization. The dialectician might assert that any positive statement at all contains ontological implications, but the yogin might reply, "only if you want it to." The Buddha may not in the course of his life have uttered a single word, but he also preached the *dharma* for some four and a half decades. Seen in this light, to judge the *citta-mātra* doctrine of the *Las* as "bad philosophy," as the Madhyamaka has done, is to remain unaware of its point of view and irreducible insights.

If this is so, then why has the Madhyamaka been so unremittingly reductionistic *vis-à-vis* the *citta-mātra*? Several factors suggest themselves.

1 Some of this—with all due respect—may be due to the psychological mechanism of inflation wherein, intoxicated by the successes and seeming invulnerability of the method, some Madhyamakans felt that they had found a kind of supreme Buddhist method, in and of itself superior to all others. This would, of course, render it unnecessary to take other approaches seriously.

2 Again, the relentless Madhyamaka reduction may also have been due to defensiveness for, if the *Las* is any example, the Citta-mātrins mounted some telling critiques of institutionalized Buddhism (the monastic way), Buddhist scholasticism, and the unremitting apophaticism typically found among the scholastic Mahāyāna.

3 Some of the Madhyamaka reduction may additionally have been due to the socially peripheral nature of Buddhist traditions of forest renunciation, of which the *Las* (possibly along with other Citta-mātra traditions) is clearly an example. Forest yogins were unlikely to have appeared in the courtyards of Nālandā University, to debate their point of view with Madhyamaka dialecticians, and the earliest Madhyamaka

experience of Citta-mātra, when the main lines of its rebuttal took shape, may have been based primarily on hearsay.

4 A further contributing factor may have been the natural contentiousness of Indian monastic schools, which were continually vying with one another and with non-Buddhist schools, with social prestige, material donations, and religio-political power at stake.

5 Not unrelated to this is undoubtedly a final contributing factor, namely the widely used Buddhist hermeneutical strategy of what may be called "inclusion and subordination." By this dialectical trick, Buddhists have included other schools within their philosophical frameworks, thus granting them relative legitimacy. At the same time, they have invariably slotted the viewpoints of these others into lower levels within their own system, giving them strictly subordinate positions. It may be pointed out that this widespread and accepted Buddhist method has had a positive effect, in diminishing, at least somewhat, the chances for mutual repudiation and open conflict. On the other side, it also has a negative impact, for it would seem too often to have allowed Buddhist schools to seal themselves off from genuine communication with one another, as in the present instance. To this failure of real dialogue within Buddhism may, in turn, be attributed much of the conservatism and rigidification that has so often characterized the scholastic schools.

The preceding has important implications for the predominant scholarly interpretation of the *Las*, referred to above, as a work of "idealistic" Buddhism. We modern scholars would do well to resist the temptation to interpret texts like the *Las* through traditional, in this case Madhyamakan, eyes. When we do not resist this temptation, in the present instance we import an alien and severely reductionistic framework into our interpretations, and miss the point of the text itself. Beyond this, we perhaps need to take a position that traditional Buddhists themselves have rarely, if ever, taken. This is the position that, in order to arrive at an acceptable understanding of the different Buddhist orientations, it is unjustifiable to try to fit them all into one unitary scheme; that is, the different Buddhist orientations are not reducible to one another. This confronts us with the vision of final plurality and ambiguity among Buddhist orientations. Thus when we speak of the *Las*, as revealed in its doctrine of *citta-mātra*, as a work of idealism, in the Madhyamaka sense, it would be well to acknowledge that we are not interpreting the *Las* within its own frame of reference, but rather speaking as Madhyamakans and as polemicists.

Postscript

Our examination of the doctrine of *citta-mātra* in the *Las* also has implications for the understanding of the *Las'* relation to some other Buddhist traditions. In this connection it may be observed that the definition of *citta-mātra* and the structure of *citta* in the *Las* are very closely related to Tathāgata-garbha thought, as found in the Tathāgata-garbha *sūtras* and in the *Ratnagotravibhaga,* the classical commentary on the Tathāgata-garbha. Thus for both the *Las* and Tathāgata-garbha tradition, the essence of the minds of all sentient beings is identified as Buddha-nature (*[buddha] gotra*) and *tathāgata-garbha;* this is also what renders beings capable of full enlightenment; this enlightened essence is covered by

adventitious defilements which hide it but do not fundamentally stain or in any essential way compromise it; the process of the path is to uncover this potential and to bring it out into the open; the bodhisattva is the one who is doing so; when fully brought out, it appears as *dharma-kāya,* as wisdom, etc. The Buddha essence is endowed with great qualities *(guṇa)* wherein its compassion may be manifest, including the very same things that characterize the ultimate *citta,* the powers *(bala),* the super-knowledges *(abhijñā),* and the masteries *(vaśitas).* It is not only in basic structure and substance that the *Las* reveals its filiation with the Tathāgata-garbha tradition, but also in a number of specifics.[58] The *Las* thus reveals itself as standing within the framework of Tathāgata-garbha tradition, broadly conceived.

Scholars have often tended to see the *Las* as a combination of classical Indian Yogācāra and Tathāgata-garbha thought.[59] There is some justification in such a view because, like the Indian Yogācāra and unlike the Indian Tathāgata-garbha school, the *Las* discusses the *ālaya* and the other seven *vijñānas,* is interested in exploring the operation of the deluded personality, and discusses the three natures *(tri-svabhāva).* However, as we have seen, the *Las'* continuities with the Tathāgata-garbha thought are quite fundamental as regards both philosophical structure and actual content. In comparison, its continuities with the Indian Yogācāra are less obvious and tend, in fact, to be terminological rather than substantial.[60] One place this is seen is in the way in which the *ālaya* is interpreted in the classical Yogācāra, on the one hand, and the *Las,* on the other. For the *Las,* as we have seen, the *ālaya* is identified as the *svacitta,* the *citta-mātra,* which is the uncontaminated potential for enlightenment that needs to be uncovered. By contrast, for Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and other early Yogācārin masters, the *ālaya* is a defiled mind that must cease in order for realization to occur.[61] This is a position which, as we have seen, the *Las* sharply criticizes. Another example is provided by the way in which the "three natures" are understood by the *Las* and the classical Yogācāra. For the Las, as seen above, *pariniṣpanna*, realization, is understood to be disjunct from both *parikalpita* and *paratantra*. By contrast, both the *Saṃdhinirmocana*[62] and, following that text, Asaṅga and his tradition[63] understand *pariniṣpanna* to be inseparable from *paratantra: pariniṣpanna* is defined as *paratantra* seen without the overlay of *parikalpita*.[64]

A final example of the distance between the *Las* and the classical Yogācāra is seen in the way in which *citta-mātra,* in its infrequent appearance in the Yogācāra, is put to use. As mentioned, Kochumuttom finds the term appearing at least occasionally in Vasubandhu's works, where it is identified with *prajñapti-mātra* and *vijñapti-mātra*.[65] In this context, *vijñapti-mātra* indicates the view that all of constructed reality *(saṃsāra)* is nothing but mental projections or concepts *(vijñapti).* This is not to say that apart from concepts there is utter non-being, but rather that the "reality" that I, as a *saṃsāric* being, experience, is composed of my hypostatizations. Kochumuttom remarks,

> [In Vasubandhu's works], *vijñapti-mātra* and *citta-mātra*…do not at all refer to the absolute reality, or to the final mode of existence …whenever he uses these phrases, he means that whatever falls within the reach of

> one's *saṃsāric* experience, is mere representation of consciousness or thought-only or mind-only.[66]

As we have seen, such a restriction could hardly be farther from the usage in the *Las*.[67]

The *Las* may thus be identified as an expression of the Tathāgata-garbha school, again broadly conceived, although one of which we do not seem to have other examples. At the same time, the *Las* clearly does differ from other Tathāgata-garbha schools in some respects. Most obviously, while in the Tathāgata-garbha *sūtras* and the *Ratnagotravibhāga* the preferred term for the enlightened potential is *tathāgata-garbha* or *(tathāgata)-gotra,* in the *Las, citta* is the primary term.[68] More significantly, as we have seen, the *Las* gives considerable importance to *śūnyatā* and to Prajñāpāramitā type language,[69] something that is not found to anywhere near the same degree in mainstream Tathāgata-garbha thought. Another important difference has to do with the primary methodology for the attainment of realization in the *Las* and the Tathāgata-garbha tradition. In the *Las,* the primary means is, as we have seen, meditation, and the community which it reflects is made up of Buddhist yogins living in the forest and spending most of their time in retreat, meditating. By contrast, the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda Sūtra*, the *Ratnagotravibhāga,* and other Tathāgata-garbha texts appear to reflect a different methodology and a different religious context. For these texts, if we take them at face value, devotion to the Buddha seems to play the primary transformative role. Closely related, the community behind the Tathāgata-garbha literature is more diverse, and appears to include lay people as major participants. These differences in style, methodology, doctrinal formulation, and religious context all suggest that while the thought of the Tathāgatagarbha school and the *Las* are very close to one another in structure and substance, they likely represent two historically more or less separate lines of tradition.

In conclusion, then, the *Las:* (1) represents a tradition quite separate from the Indian Madhyamaka, although it gives an important place to *śūnyatā* and includes Prajñāpāramitā-type language; (2) stands clearly apart from classical Yogācāra, although it includes discussion of the *ālaya* and the seven *vijñānas,* and the three natures (while giving different interpretations); and (3) is also distinct from mainline Tathāgata-garbha, although the basic character of its thought is most closely aligned with that of this school. There is, however, another tradition coming to light much later in Nepal and Tibet, which shows remarkably close affinity with the *Las*. This is the so-called *gzhan stong* or "emptiness of other" school, like the *Las* reflective of a group of meditating yogins, which is said to have been founded by the Tantric master Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1316) and has played such an important role in the development of the Madhyamaka and Vajrayāna in Tibet.[70] What is most remarkable is that in many ways, the *gzhan stong* conforms closely to the Las, much more closely than any other known tradition. Thus, like that of the *Las,* the basic structure of the *gzhan stong* is provided by Tathāgata-garbha thought. Like the *Las,* the *gzhan stong* also reflects in its system both Prajñāpāramitā notions and ideas of classical Yogācāra, and these latter include the same notions that are included by the Las: the *ālaya,* the seven *vijñānas,* the functioning of the deluded personality, and the three natures. Even more noteworthy, the interpretations of both Prajñāpāramitā and Yogācāra notions are virtually the same as in the *Las*. As in the *Las, śūnyatā* is understood as emptiness of self-nature, but not non-existence of appear-

ance. As in the *Las* and in contrast to classical Yogācāra, the *ālaya* is seen as identical with the *tathāgata-garbha*. And as in the *Las* and in contrast to classical Yogācāra, the *parinispanna-svabhāva* is understood as disjunct from both *parikalpita-svabhāva* and *paratantra-svabhāva*. Finally, like the *Las,* the *gzhan stong* protests against the potential nihilism of Madhyamaka dialectic, and offers the same kind of rebuttal.

These continuities between the *Las* and the much later *gzhan stong* are so fundamental and so specific as to arrest our attention. At the least, they put the question of the sources of the *gzhan stong* in a new light, suggesting that, at least in a general way, they can perhaps be identified at a much earlier time than has been thought. The *Las* reveals that there was at least one school of yogins around at an early time with some elements of *gzhan stong* already in place and it at least raises the possibility that the *gzhan stong* may even have arisen from a circle of yogins with some historical connection to those behind the *Las*. This, along with the *Las'* important Ch'an connections, suggests that the community of yogins behind the *Las* may have had a much larger impact on subsequent Buddhist history than has previously been supposed. It may also be noted that the *gzhan stong* appears clearly and closely tied to the Vajrayāna. This, in turn, raises interesting questions about the origins of certain trends of Vajrayāna connected with the *gzhan stong,* such as Mahamudra and Dzogchen, trends of "formless practice" which are also more than a little reminiscent of aspects of the *Las*.

Notes

1 I wish to thank Professor Alan Sponberg for reading and commenting upon a previous draft of this chapter. For a useful summary of the thought of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* as well as a detailed bibliography of works on the *sūtra,* see Florin Giripescu Sutton, *Existence and Enlightenment in the Laṅkāvātara Sūtra*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991.

2 In this chapter, I use the term "Madhyamaka" to indicate Madhyamaka in the strict sense of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka.

3 Walpola Rahula, for example, remarks that "Some scholars have maintained that, according to the *vijñaptimātratā* or *citta-mātratā* philosophy in the Yogācāra (Vijñānavāda) system, the mind *(citta)* or consciousness *(vijñāna)* is the only reality, the ultimate reality." Rahula, *Zen and the Taming of the Bull, Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought,* London: Gordon Fraser, 1978, 79.

4 Such an interpretation of Citta-mātra is found articulated in the Madhyamaka works of Candrakīrti, Śāntideva, and other great Indian Buddhist masters. Cf. for example, Śāntideva 's *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* along with its Tibetan commentary, in Stephen Batchelor, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life,* Dharamsala (India): Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1981, 135–42. Cf. also Candrakīrti's comments, *Prasannapadā* 62–3, Mervin Sprung, *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way,* Boulder, Colo.: Prajna Press, 1979, 55–6; *Prasannapadā* 274–6, Sprung, *Lucid Exposition,* 162–3.

5 Willis remarks that this "idealistic" interpretation of the trends understood as "Citta-mātra" "is commonly held—by Madhyamika theorists as well as many modern day scholars" (Janis Willis, *On Knowing Reality,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1979, 27).

6 Cf. Ven. Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rimpoche, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness,* translated and arranged by Shenpen Hookham, Oxford: Longchen Foundation, 1986, 76–77, and Herbert Guenther, *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice,* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972, 93. For a summary of Tibetan views of

the "Citta-mātra school," see David Seyfort Ruegg, *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra,* Paris: École française d'extrême orient, 1969, 64ff.; 101ff.; 120ff.; 139ff.; and 237ff.

7 Cf. Frederick Lessing and Alex Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras,* The Hague: Mouton, 1968, 97–8, and *Guide to the Nyingma Edition of the sDe dge bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur,* Berkeley, Calif.: Dharma Press, 2 vols, entries 4020–4085.

8 Mkhas grub rje sees it as "the basic *sūtra* of the last wheel" [47], "which teaches *citta-mātra* doctrine" (Lessing and Wayman, *Fundamentals,* 53).

9 The *Daśabhūmika Sūtra* must be mentioned in this context owing to a famous and often cited passage that occurs in the text: *"cittamātram idam yad idaṃ traidhātukam …*" Rander's ed. p. 49 c; Vaidhya, *Daśabhūmika Sūtra (Dbs),* 32.9. The *Dbs* is a part of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, for which see note 10. Schmithausen has pointed out that this phrase occurs earlier, in the *Pratyutpannabuddha-saṃmukha-avasthitasamādhi Sūtra* (also known as the *Bhadrapāla Sūtra*) which was translated into Chinese as early as 179 CE or a hundred years prior to the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*. Lambert Schmithausen, "On the Problem of the Relation of Spiritual Practice and Philosophical Theory in Buddhism," in Cultural Department of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi, *German Scholars on India, Contributions to Indian Studies,* volume II, Bombay: Nachiketa Publications, 1976, 246–7; For the meaning of the term in this text, cf. Schmithausen's discussion "On the Problem of the Relation." [Mid].

10 Schmithausen, for example, comments that he has found no occurrence of the term in the monumental *Yogācāra-bhūmi* of Asaṅga's school, apart from one passage where the term is put in the mouth of an opponent (Schmithausen, "On the Problem of the Relation," 238).

11 Kochumuttom, for example, has found the term occurring infrequently in the works by Vasubandhu analyzed by him (Thomas Kochumuttom, *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience,* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982, 204, n.3).

12 Cf. Lessing and Wayman, *Fundamentals,* 97.

13 Suzuki remarks that the term *citta-mātra* also appears in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and the *Awakening of Faith* (D.T.Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968, x1). Takasaki also mentions the exposition of the *citta-mātra* theory in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, where it plays an important role (Jikido Takasaki, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttara Tantra),* Rome: Istituto italiano per il medio ed estremo oriente, 1966, 53 and 59). Mkhas grub rje comments that while some classify the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* as a third turning, Citta-mātra *sūtra,* he sees it as representative of the second turning (Lessing and Wayman, *Fundamentals,* 47–9).

14 The *Las* is a Mahāyāna *sūtra* composed in Sanskrit sometime prior to 443 when the first Chinese translation was made (it was translated twice more in 513 and 700–704). The Sanskrit *Las* was edited by Nanjio (Kyoto, 1923) and later by Vaidya (*Buddhist Sanskrit Texts* 3, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1963). For a brief evaluation of these two editions, see Arnold Kunst, "Some of the Polemics in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*," in Somaratna Balasooriya *et al., Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula,* London: Gordon Fraser, Sri Lanka: Vimamsa, 1980, 110, n.2. For the Chinese translations, cf. Lewis Lancaster, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue,* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1979, texts 159–161, 69–70. Ch: T. 670, 671, 672. Cf. D.T.Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968, xlii–xliii. In addition, it survives in Tibetan [To. 107, 108, P. 775, 776.] and Korean translations [K. 159, 160, 161], and has been rendered into English by Suzuki, who has also provided an extended study of the text (Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* and *Studies*). References are to page and line number(s) of Vaidya's edition, which are followed in parentheses by reference to the English translation of Suzuki. Translations from the *Las* in this chapter are my own.

As Takasaki has noted, the *Las* represents a collection of a great many short passages, some in verse, some in prose, obviously compiled from oral traditions, in the possession of a specific religious community existing in India. The many references to forest renunciation and meditation make it clear that this community was composed of wandering yogins, whose main preoccupation was meditation in retreat. (For a discussion of the "forest" context of the *Las,* see Reginald A.Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). The date of the Chinese translation tells us little about the date of the origin of the text itself, and even less about the time of origin of the material reflected in it. No doubt, the contents of the *Las* were first developed by our group of meditating Buddhist yogins, later retained by them for some unknown period of time, even later fashioned together into a preliminary version. Later still, this text gained currency in India and was sufficiently regarded to warrant translation into Chinese. The date 433 CE, then, represents only the end point of this process. The *Las* is made up of two somewhat distinct sections, chapters 1–9, in both verse and prose, and chapter 10, the "Sagathākam," containing only verse. At the time of the first Chinese translation, only chapters 1–9 of the *Las* were considered part of the text, while by the time of the later Chinese translations, the Sagathākam had been added. This led Suzuki to conclude that the Sagathākam was later than the rest of the *Las* (Suzuki, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*,xlii–xliii). Takasaki, however, after closely analyzing chapters 1–9 and the Sagathākam, has convincingly argued that both "texts" reflect the same religious context and period, and were composed at roughly the same time from a common body of oral tradition circulating among a particular community of yogins (Jikido Takasaki, "Analysis of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*:In Search of Its Original Form," in *Indianisme et Bouddhisme, Melanges offerts à Mgr Étienne Lamotte,* Louvain-la-neuve: Institut orientaliste, 1980, 345–7). See also Jikido Takasaki, "Sources of the *Laṅkāvatāra* and Its Position in Mahāyāna Buddhism," in L.A.Hercus *et al., Indological and Buddhist Studies, Volume in Honour of Professor J.W.de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday,* Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies, 1982. This conclusion suggests that any analysis of the thought of the *Las* cannot exclude the Sagathākam from consideration, on the grounds that it represents a different historical era. In fact, as will be clear in the following, on the matter of *citta-mātra, Las* 1–9 and the Sagathākam

speak with one voice. (As Suzuki has pointed out, however (e.g. *Studies,* 418, s.v. *parikalpa),* there are some differences between the uses of terms in chapters 1–9 and those in the Sagathākam. In this chapter, we cite the Sagathākam sparingly, primarily where it represents essentially the same view as the earlier chapters.

15 Mkhas grub rje remarks that the *Las* is classified by some as a "third turning" and thus a Citta-mātra *sūtra* (Lessing and Wayman, *Fundamentals,* 49), although he himself prefers to classify it as belonging to the second turning (ibid., 47).

16 Willis, *On Knowing Reality,* 31.

17 First references in square brackets are to the page and line number of the Sanskrit text of the *Las,* while references to the English translation by Suzuki follow, in parentheses.

18 Alan Sponberg's translation.

19 In most cases, *citta* is explicitly said to be synonymous with one or another of the following terms. In some cases the identity may be inferred when *citta* and another term are each identified with a third term or are each given the same definition, revealing their synonymity. In discussion views of the ultimate in classical Yogācāra, Kochumuttom similarly examines the synonyms of the ultimate that are used (*A Buddhist Doctrine,* 6).

20 And *ālayaṃ…bhāvābhāva-vivarjitam* [123.6–7 (245)]. The Sagathākam speaks of the "highest *ālaya-vijñāna*" *(parama-ālayavijñāna)* and also of the conceptualized ālaya *(vijñaptir-ālaya)* [111.11 (231)]. These need not be two *ālayas,* but rather *ālaya* seen from two different angles, or perhaps in two modes, in the first place as *ālaya* in its character as the ultimate to be realized, in the second, as *ālaya* in its conceptualized state.

21 Here it is called *vijñāna,* short for *ālaya-vijñāna*. The ultimate *citta* is also sometimes equated with *gotra* [110.5 (229)], a common synonym of *tathāgata-garbha* in the Tathāgata-garbha literature.

22 The *tathāgata-garbha* is further equated with the *Buddha-bhūmi,* the stage of Buddhahood and the *adhyātma,* the supreme self [5.7–8 (10)].

23 Cf. Suzuki, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra,* 136, n. 2.

24 "What is known" and "knowing" are spoken of analogically, and have nothing to do with *saṃsāric* modes of thought.

25 *Pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* itself is said to be non-dual *(advaya),* empty *(śūnya),* and non-conceptual *(nirvikalpa),* and is equated with thusness *(tathatā),* the reality limit *(bhūtakoṭi),* and true reality *(dharmatā)* [119–1–2 (240)]. *Pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* is the third of the set of three *svabhāvas* that are discussed in the *Las* (e.g. 29–5ff. [59–60]). *Parikalpita-svabhāva* (hypostatized nature), *paratantra-svabhāva* (dependent nature), and *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva,* perfected or realized nature. For a discussion of these see below.

26 As in *sva-bhāva,* "self-being" or "self-nature," not reliant upon external conditions and *sva-bhū,* self-existent, that is without dependence on external causes.

27 Suzuki usually translates *svacitta* as "mind itself." Occasionally, however, he opts for "his own mind" (for example, 18 translating 8.14). In the instance cited, as in most other occurrences, there appears little justification for this personalistic translation and it is unclear why Suzuki has allowed it to stand.

28 The non-substantiality of the ultimate *citta* is implicitly affirmed in the *Las'* repeated asseveration, strongly reminiscent of the Prajñāpāramitā, that the idea of a substantial self-nature *(svabhāva)* is, in any application whatever, a figment of the imagination. All things *(dharmas)* are emptiness *(śūnyatā),* are unborn *(anutpāda)* and non-dual *(advaya),* and have no self-nature *(niḥsvabhāva)* [31.20] (65)]. Thus we learn that in the perception of a Buddha,

that is in ultimate reality, the egolessness of persons and phenomena *(dharma pudgala-nairatmya)* is seen and the two veils of the mental defilements and the knowables *(kleśa-jñeya)* are transcended [10.15 (22–3)]. Moreover, the entire world *(loka)* (including both subjective and objective phenomena, physical and mental reality) has no birth and no destruction *(utpāda-bhaṅga-rahita)*, is disjunct from concepts such as eternalism *(śāśvata)* and nihilism *(uccheda)* [10.9 (22)], is like a sky-flower *(khapuṣpa-saṃnibha)* [10.5 (22)], and cannot be conceived of in terms of being or non-being) [10.6 (22)]. The world has no self-nature, and is compared to a cloud, a vision, a mirage, a dream, the moon reflected in the ocean [19–21–2 (38)]. This same point is reiterated when we are told that all *dharmas* (existents) are like illusions *(māyopama),* have nothing to do with mind or consciousness, and likewise cannot be conceived as being or not being [10.7–8 (22)]. The world along with all its phenomena, we are being told, lacks a self-nature *(svabhāva)*. Thus all *dharmas* are of the nature of being unattainable *(alabdha-ātmaka)* and stand beyond the range of the mind *(agrahaṇato vijñānena)* [8.16–21 (18–19)].

29 Other terms that are similarly used to indicate two orders of being include *jñāna* (transcendental wisdom, ordinary knowledge) and *buddhi* (realized insight, the mundane intellect) (cf. Suzuki, *Studies,* 427, s.v. *buddhi*).

30 The two uses of the term *citta,* ultimate and relative, are paralleled by other terms, such as the similar twofold use of *vijñāna*. Thus the *Las* outlines three modes of the *vijñāna,* the evolving *vijñāna* *(pravṛtti-lakṣaṇa)*, the karma producing *vijñāna* *vijñāna (karma-lakṣaṇa)* both of which are relative, and the *vijñāna* in its own nature *(jāti-lakṣaṇa)*. The first two are conditioned, while the last one is not. The first two *vijñānas* correspond to *citta* as the conditioned, phenomenal mind, while the *jāti-lakṣaṇa* corresponds to the ultimate *citta* (Suzuki, *Studies,* 186–9).

31 Suzuki, possibly relying on the Chinese translation rather than the Sanskrit, translates "[they are] discriminations in the mind-only," as if "discriminations" were a predicate nominative (when in fact it is a passive verb in Sanskrit) and *citta-mātra* were in the locative case (when it is in the nominative case). This method of translation is repeated elsewhere in Suzuki's rendering. For example, at *Las* 21.14 we read *ālayaṃ hi tathā citraṃ vijñānākhyaṃ pravartate:citraṃ vijñānākhyaṃ pravartate:* the *ālaya* [n.] thus indeed arises as the variegated perception of the *vijñānas*. As in the previous example, Suzuki here translates "in the *ālaya* is produced the variety of what is known as the *vijñānas*" (42), obscuring the fact that it is the *ālaya* itself that is subjected to hypostatization and appears to deluded cognition to be the *vijñānas*.

32 This use of *(citta)-mātra* is, of course, associated with a quite different doctrine from that of the classical Yogācāra usage of *mātra,* as in *vijñapti-mātratā,* indicating that the world of *saṃsāra* is nothing but thought-construction. The *Las* does use the term *mātra* occasionally in this way: "the triple world is nothing but concept *(prajñapti-mātra)*" [68.24 (145)] (see also *Las* 112.16 [232]).

33 In the *Las,* the seven consciousnesses generally represent the relative *citta*. In the Sagathākam, however, we read of the *ālaya* as pure and the *ālaya* as defiled (see note 4i 24), perhaps paralleled by a passage in chapter three referring to the "eight consciousnesses" being overcome in realization [57.3–5 (120)]. Apart from a few exceptions such as these, however, the *Las* prefers to use the *ālaya* as identical to the ultimate *citta*.

34 As seen in note 19 above.

35 The text mentions oral instructions on meditation practice *(yoga-upadeśa)* which are to be carried out [24.14–15 (49)].

36 The *Las* says that the "bodhisattva will be instructed in the detailed analysis of hypostatizing thought *(parikalpita)*" and that this will lead to his realization [23.13 (46)].

37 Literally, "by realized insight."

38 Thus one enters *pratyātma-vedya-gati,* the state of self-realization [1.25 (5)], and it is this that was taught by the Buddhas of old [2.15 (5)].

39 As Suzuki would seem to have it with his translation "inner wisdom."

40 The knowledge indicated here is surely, as Suzuki translates, known by oneself, but much more is involved. This knowledge is not meditated and not dependent, and thus it differs from any other kind of knowledge that one may have. It goes without saying that this state is *deśanā-naya-nirmukta,* "free from any doctrinal system" [2.20 (10)]. This independence of realization lies behind the statement that the realized person is not reliant on others *(aparapraṇeya)* [5.5 (9)]. In the profound sense, his self-reliance is to be understood as a direct function of the independence, and thus absolute trustworthiness, of his realization.

41 We read that from the ultimate viewpoint, there is no distinction between the ocean *(ālaya)* and the waves *(vijñānas)* *(udadheśca taraṃgāṇām . . . nāsti viśeṣaṇam)* [21.17 (42)]. The *Las* adds that the waves are neither different nor non-different from the *ālaya* [21.11–12 (42)]. They are not different because, ultimately, they are the nature of the ultimate *citta;* they are not non-different, because there is, relatively speaking, an evolution *(pravṛtti)* that occurs.

42 *Mātra* is used in a similar way with other terms. For example, realization is also described as the entry into imagelessness only, which is awareness itself *(svacitta-nirābhāsa-mātra)* [19.29 (38)]. Similarly, we read of *sva-citta-dṛśya-mātra,* "nothing but the manifestation of awareness" [5.3 (9)].

43 Similar to other yogic traditions, the *Las* speaks of realization in terms of cessation *(nirodha).* However, the *Las* is careful to specify exactly what it means in this instance. It is the *vāsanās,* contained in the *ālaya,* which are produced when unrealities *(abhūta)* are hypostatized *(parikalpita)* and which are the seeds of future action, that cease. Elsewhere, we are told that in realization it is the *mano-vijñāna* that is eliminated, and this involves eliminating all seven *vijñānas* [51.3 1ff. (109)]. However, the *Las* is emphatic that the *ālaya* itself, variously equated with the *vijñāna* in its own nature *(jāti-vijñāna),* the (ultimate) *citta,* or the *dharmakāya,* does not cease [18.19 (34–5)]. To claim that the *ālaya* ceases would be tantamount to affirming a nihilistic doctrine of the heretics [18.21–2 (34–5)]. It is the apparently existing dualistic world as something apart and separate from pure awareness that ceases. This is tantamount to defining a middle way between eternalism and nihilism. Eternalism is avoided because the impression of a substantialistic world ceases, but nihilism is avoided because the *ālaya,* as pure awareness *(citta-mātra)* does not cease.

44 *samāropāpavādo hi cittamātre na vidyate/*

dehabhogapratiṣṭhābhaṃ ye cittaṃ nābhijānate/

samāropāpavādeṣu te carantyavipaścitaḥ//

[30.16–8 (62)]

45 Cf. Asaṅga's definition, *Bodhisattva-bhūmi,* 33.15ff. Here Asaṅga says that exaggeration is affirming the existence of what are non-existent individual characteristics, while minimization denies the basis upon which such affirmations are made. Cf. Willis, *On Knowing Reality,* 106.

46 *anutpannā hyamī dharmā na caivaite na santi ca/ gandharva-nagara-svapna-māyā-nirmāṇa-sādṛśāḥ//*

47 *jāla-vṛksa-cchāyā-sadṛśāḥ skandhā vijñāna-pañcamāḥ/ māyā-svapnopāmadṛṣā (syā?) vijñaptyā ma vikalpayate//*

48 Similarly, just like an echo, a tree reflected in water, an image in a mirror, all phenomena are just reflections of awareness, yet are mistakenly taken to be real in and of themselves. Thus the *skandhas* are to be regarded without hypostatization, like a tree reflected in water, as *māyā* and a dream *(svapna)* [39.27–8 (83)]. Thus when things *(dharmas)* are seen as they are, they appear as without substance, essentially nothing but pure awareness [40.7–8 (83)], the mere appearance *(ābhāsa)* of being *(bhāva)* [40.19 (84)]. This is what it means to speak of realization as seeing "nothing but the manifestations of mind itself" *(svacitta-dṛśya-mātra)* [71.24 (152)]. The same point is made again in the analogy of the ocean and the waves. The ocean, we are told, is clearly recognized in its waves [21.29 (43)].

49 *yugapatkāle*. Suzuki's translation of "immediately" doesn't make much sense here.

50 *udadheryathā taraṃganā hi darpaṇe supine yathā/ dṛśyanti yugapatkāle tathā cittaṃ svagocare//* [22.5–6 (43)].

51 Suzuki's useful translation of *ārya*.

52 This in fact translates the term *ābhāsa*, used in the passage cited above to refer to appearance which is not discordant with *citta-mātra* [40.19 (84)]. For references to *ābhāsa* which, however, may also mean a conditioned image, see D.T.Suzuki, *An Index to the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Kyoto: The Sanskrit Buddhist Texts Publishing Society, 1934, 40, s.v., *ābhāsa.*

53 Who are the nameless critics implied by this exchange? Perhaps a partial answer is given elsewhere in the *Las* where we find, as noted above, a severe criticism of those who hold the thesis *(pratijñā)* that all phenomena are unborn *(anutpanna)*, empty *(śūnya)*, and without self-nature *(asvabhāva)* [68.10 (144)]. Likely in relation to this same group, we read "better the view of self *(pudgala-dṛṣṭi)* as large as Mt.Sumeru *(sumeru-mātra)*, than the view of emptiness *(śūnyata-dṛṣṭi)* based on pride in beingness and nonbeingness" [58.32–3 (126)]. (See Edgerton's comment on *nāstyastitvābhimānikasya* in this passage: Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, William Dwight Whitney Linguistic Series, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, 55, s.v. *abhimānika*.) The characterization in the *Las* of the proponents of this view suggests that they are monastics and the terminology clearly reveals them to be Mahāyānists. Whether they are Madhyamakans in the classical mould remains, however, uncertain. On the issue of polemics in the *Las*, cf. Kunst, "Some of the Polemics," 103–112.

54 *cittamātraṃ yadā lokam prapaśyanti jinātmajāḥ/tadā nairmāṇikaṃ kāyaṃ kriyāsaṃskāravarjitam/labhante te balābhijñāvaśitaiḥ saha saṃyutam//*

55 In Conze's words, "the most essential mark of a *dharma* is…that it is empty, and this mark swallows up all the others, so that all *dharmas* have one and the same mark, i.e., to be empty" (Edward Conze, "Ontology of the Prajñāpāramitā," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 122).

56 *Prasannapadā*, 522; Sprung's translation, *Lucid Exposition*, 249.

57 *Prasannapadā*, 524; Sprung, *Lucid Exposition*, 251.

58 Takasaki, *A Study*, 336ff. Thus particular aspects of the *Las* remind one strongly of one or another of the *Tathāgata-garbha sūtras* or the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, such as: (1) the description of *tathāgata-garbha* [33.10–15 (68–9)] *(Śrimālādevīsiṃbanāda Sūtra)* (Takasaki, *A Study*, 37–9.); (2) the analogies it uses for *tathāgata-garbha* [Ibid.] *(Tathāgata-garbha Sūtra)* (Takasaki, *A Study*, 32); (3) the use of specific terms such as *nitya, dhruva, śiva,* and *śāśvata* as the four attributes of *dharmakāya* *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa* and *Śrīmālādevīsiṃbanāda Sūtra* (Takasaki, *A Study*, 39, 167).

59 Takasaki, *A Study*, 53.

60 Kochumuttom, among others, has commented on the fundamental divergence between the *Las* and the texts of classical Yogācāra analyzed by him (*A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience,* 6).

61 For example, *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha.*

62 Étienne Lamotte, *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra,1 ‘explication des mystères,* Louvain: Bureau Du Requeil, 1935, 59–65 and 188–92.

63 Cf. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna āna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations,* London: Routledge, 1989, 82–85.

64 On the three natures in Yogācāra, cf. Nagao Gadjin, “The Buddhist Worldview as Elucidated in the Three-Nature Theory and Its Similes,” *Eastern Buddhist,* 1983, 1–18, and Alan Sponberg, “The Trisvabhāva Doctrine in India and China: A Study of Three Exegetical Models,” *Ryukoku Daigaku Bukkyo Bunka Kenkyujo Kiyô,* XXI (1982), 97–119. It is a pertinent question, of course, to what extent these two different renderings of the three natures are fundamentally different. Cf. *Las* 53.16–17, 22–23 (112, vss. 183 and 186) which seems, on the surface, hardly different from the classical Yogācāra version.

65 Kochumuttom, *A Buddhist Doctrine,* 204, n. 3.

66 Ibid., 102. It may be remarked that the *Las,* Sagathākam, occasionally uses *vijñapti-mātra* in this sense, for example 110.9 (229) and 112.16 (232). *Cittamātra,* however, is not used with this meaning.

67 We have previously identified two different ways in which the term *citta-mātra* is used in Buddhist tradition: (1) *citta-mātra* as pure awareness, as in the *Las;* and (2) *citta-mātra* as the notion that the conditioned consciousness *(vijñāna)* is all that exists and is the source of the external world (in the view of Madhyamakan critics). In Vasubandhu identification of *citta-mātra* with *vijñpti-mātra,* concept only, we have yet a third distinct meaning of the term. This appears to be similar to an early meaning of *citta-mātra* identified by Schmithausen in the *Pratyutpannabuddha-saṃmukha-avasthita-samādhi Sūtra* (Schmithausen, “On the Problem of the Relation,” 246–7). This is also the way Willis takes *citta-mātra* in her discussion (*On Knowing Reality,* 24–28). However, as we have seen, both this meaning and the Madhyamaka definition clearly diverge from the one that predominates in the *Las*.

68 This difference is, of course, relative, for the *Las* uses *tathāgata-garbha* as a common enough synonym for *citta,* while the *tathāgata-garbha* texts use *citta* as a synonym for *tathāgata-garbha*. In addition, the two orientations share other synonyms for their primary term, for instance *jnana, prajñā, dharma-kāya*.

69 This is reflected in Mkhas grub rje’s classification of the *Las* as a second turning *sūtra* (Lessing and Wayman, *Fundamentals,* 47).

70 For a summary of this school, see Ven. Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, *Progressive Stages,* 75–88.

Part III
WESTERN BUDDHISM

11
CREATING A FOCAL POINT FOR BUDDHISM IN THE WEST
The German Buddhist pioneer Paul Dahlke

Martin Baumann

The spread of Buddhism beyond the Asian confines and its settlement in numerous Western countries has been an important and well-recognized subject within Buddhist Studies for two decades. Charles S.Prebish has been at the forefront of those studying and promoting research in this field.[1] Furthermore, unlike other US-scholars studying Buddhism in the West, Prebish has not restricted his view to North America. Instead, he has also taken an interest in Buddhism's spread to and history in other Western countries. In line with this global perspective which seeks to register and compare developments in the institutionalization of Buddhism, noting processes of adaptation and innovation as well as tracing individual stories of deceased and living Buddhist pioneers and teachers, this chapter aims to add a further piece to the colourful mosaic of "Buddhism beyond Asia." The chapter introduces the early German Buddhist Paul Dahlke, a main figure of the emerging Buddhist movement during the 1920s in Germany. Dahlke was the builder of the famous Buddhist House which still exists in Berlin and constructor of the first monument in Europe publicly venerating the Buddha. Yet despite Dahlke's importance for the lasting establishing of Buddhism in continental Europe, his achievements and efforts are hardly known outside the German-speaking world.

The description of Dahlke's life and work is intended to document these pioneering Buddhist activities. Furthermore, the study argues that a comprehensive understanding of Dahlke is only possible if his ideals are set within a broader culture-historic framework—that of German romanticism. The cultural grammar of the German romantic movement provided the deep structure to which a new religious lexicon with its Buddhist vocabulary was added. As argued in an earlier paper, though based on a different theoretical perspective, religiously Buddhists in the West have turned East, but their life-style, modes of interpretation, and grammar of religiosity have remained Western.[2] Dahlke, as well as other early Buddhists, evinced an aptitude for cultural syncretism, a dynamic process in which Eastern and Western patterns and elements were mingled in an innovative way.

A pioneering German Buddhist: Paul Dahlke

The beginning of the spread of Buddhist ideas beyond Asia dates back to the late eighteenth century. Philosophical treatises and philological translations introduced Buddhist concepts and stimulated interest among artists, intellectuals, and academics. In Germany in particular, the writings of philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) introduced Buddhist philosophy and ethics to a growing audience. During the 1880s, for the first time in the German-speaking world, so-called "self-converted followers of the teaching" declared themselves as Buddhists in their writings. Organizationally, interest in Buddhist ideas and ethics gained momentum when in 1903 Dr. Karl Seidenstücker (1876–1936) founded the first Buddhist society in Europe, the Society for the Buddhist Mission in Germany. Further Buddhist societies and associations were established, although these were often short-lived. After the devastating experience of the First World War, attitudes changed. Instead of establishing aesthetic discussion circles and societies, pioneering Buddhists now founded religious communities. The teachings were considered not only to be of importance for the mind and intellect, but also to be applied to the whole person. Religious practices such as worship, spiritual exercises, and devotional acts became part of Buddhist life during the Weimar Republic (1920s).[3]

In this general setting of emerging interest in Buddhist ideas, Paul Dahlke grew up and encountered Buddhist teachings and practices. Born in 1865 as the oldest child of five, the son of a Protestant civil servant in Prussia, Paul Dahlke went to school and studied medicine in Berlin and became a doctor in 1889. "Already at the age of 24 I was unleashed on an unsuspecting world," Dahlke later told his pupil, Margarete Lau.[4] Dahlke's practice, which he took over from an old homeopathic doctor, grew quickly, and he gained an outstanding reputation for his homeopathic cures. During the 1890s he published numerous articles on pharmacology and served as editor of the "German Journal for Homeopathy."

Beside the strenuous homeopathic surgery—he could be found in his surgery on Sundays—Dahlke took an interest in mathematics, music, and literature. He shared a "joy for hair-splitting exact argumentation,"[5] which later found expression in his manner of reasoning in his works on Buddhism. For some time the doctor, who was well established in a middle-class setting, employed a female pianist who played piano sonatas by Beethoven and other classics for him. During the 1890s Dahlke was a passionate lover of music, especially of Beethoven. With respect to literature, he preferred to read works by Goethe. He knew *Faust II* nearly by heart; "books had always been his best friends," his sisters recalled.[6] Also during the 1890s, Dahlke came into contact with Buddhist ideas by reading Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's philosophical treatises had no inspiring effect on him, unlike many academics and intellectuals.

In 1898, the wealthy 33-year-old doctor started off on a one-year journey around the world. The idealizing portrayals of the South Seas, which had fascinated European romantics since the reports by Louis-Antoine de Bougainville and Adelbert von Chamisso, also influenced Dahlke's destination. "Tahiti and Oweihi…called me more than any wisdom of India; and in June 1898 I arrived in Apia on the Samoan Islands, which appeared to me as the highest fulfillment of my life."[7] Dahlke admired the supposed originality, simplicity, and carefreeness of the way of life of the Samoans.

> Young men decorated with flowers set out in the morning to look for tree fruit as nourishment in the wilderness of the woods. They neither work nor worry, nor argue nor quarrel. Their extremely tender condition of character makes life among them easy and pleasant.[8]

In 1900 Dahlke set out on another long-distance journey with the explicit aim of studying Buddhism in Ceylon. A quarter of a century later, in 1924, while staging the first Uposatha Festival (a Buddhist ceremony for full moon) in the Buddhist House, Dahlke gave a report on his interest in Buddhism:

> Buddhism hasn't entered in the form of a shock, but it was a decisive event in my life. It had slowly and invisibly grown and taken roots like a grain of seed in the field. As I set out on my first big journey in 1898, I had already been familiar with Buddhism for several years. However, in spite of it all, my longing was not for India, but the South Seas…. The word of the Buddha must have quietly, silently, worked within me.[9]

During his stay in Colombo and in the south of Ceylon Dahlke found in the monks Sri Hikkaduwe Sumangala, Thera Nyanissara, Suryagoda Sumangala, and the Pandit Wagisware capable teachers, who taught him Buddhist doctrine and Pāli. "Therefore," he wrote, "the year 1900 had been that of my official entry into Buddhism and its teaching."[10]

During the following years Dahlke commuted between Germany and Asia. He spent the winters traveling in order to learn more about the teachings in Buddhist monasteries. In the summer, he worked in his surgery in Berlin. He had practically given up his medical practice by 1906. He was himself unable to indicate whether he had undertaken seven or eight such trips. Besides Ceylon, Dahlke visited America, Japan, China, Indonesia, Burma, Siam (Thailand), and the Buddhist sites in India.

In 1903, the same year that Karl Seidenstücker initiated the Buddhist Missionary Society, Dahlke appeared in public for the first time, launching his two volumes of *Aufsätze zum Verständnis des Buddhismus* ("Articles for an Understanding of Buddhism"). His *Buddhistische Erzählungen* ("Buddhist Stories") (Dresden 1904) were followed by six other books on Buddhism before the First World War. Dahlke tried hard to elucidate Buddhist teachings for Europeans with a background in modern sciences. He adapted the old Pāli Buddhism to modern ways of thinking and interpreted it as a sober teaching about the nature of reality.

From theoretical to practical Buddhism

Dahlke intended to travel again to Ceylon in autumn 1914. The outbreak of the First World War put a stop to his plan and he had to stay in Germany. He resumed his doctoral duties in order to contend with the mental "stubbornness" and "madness of the war."[11] At that time, his plans to establish a Buddhist House in Germany matured. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Dahlke did not want to stop at just elucidating Buddhist ideas in reading and discussion circles. It was important to him that Buddhist teachings could be

transferred into practical life, which required that they should be correctly understood and interpreted. This was one of the main reasons why he did not join any of the existing Buddhist circles or societies.

Dahlke's intimate friend and student, Kurt Fischer (1842–1942), wrote "that merely literary activity about Buddhism by Dahlke would not satisfy him for a longer period of time." A plan for a "Buddhist House" soon emerged, envisaged as a meeting point for individuals who were no longer in agreement with the acquired religion of the West, but who felt, however, that the path of materialism was not in keeping with genuine human dignity.[12] Dahlke regarded the life of a monk in Asia as too difficult for a European. As he still wished to lead a Buddhist life in accordance with the monastic way of living, "the thought of establishing a monastery in Germany matured in Dr. Dahlke. The central idea was that it should be a center for Buddhists and lay supporters where they could deepen the teachings of Buddha peacefully."[13]

Dahlke put the plans into concrete form during his vacations on the North Sea island Sylt. Dahlke's parents owned a house in Wennigstedt and the nature-loving Dahlke spent the summer months there whenever possible. Sylt reminded him a lot of the quietness and remoteness of his beloved Ceylon. The expanse of the sea, the beauty of the colors of the sky and the play of the waves evoked his far-distant and as yet unreachable Ceylon. Dahlke loved taking long walks—at times up to eight hours—through the sand hills of Sylt.

In 1914, Dahlke built as a permanent domicile for himself a flat-roofed house surrounded by a wall two yards high, in imitation of the house in Ceylon.[14] In the inner courtyard, the so-called "Sunbath," he had a stone swimming-pool like a little tank built. The house consisted of a plain bedroom and a library, which was tastefully decorated with impressive stuccowork, Chinese "rolled-pictures" and oil paintings of scenes from Egypt. The spacious room was furnished with books and a large, gracious statue of the Buddha (approximately four feet high), which Dahlke had brought back from an Asian trip. It was permeated by an atmosphere of reverence.[15]

After the First World War, Dahlke acquired a twelve-acre estate in the moorlands, not far from the lighthouse of Wennigstedt, situated towards the Wattenmeer. By purchasing another few acres, he enlarged the estate to twenty acres. The whole island spread from the open sea at Wennigstedt up to Braderup reaching down to the Wattenmeer. "There was still a lot of moorland and grassland with a large view stretching over deserted land to the two seas," wrote his female student Dorothea Girod, who visited him in Sylt.[16] There Dahlke wanted to build his *vihāra* (Buddhist monastic house) in "an idyllic remoteness."[17]

Dahlke was able to realize his project step by step. He made models from the clay of the island, which expressed his idea in a concrete form.

> We built castles in the air about the house which should one day arise there. Two wings at right angles to each other…small rooms, similar to monks' cells, a library in the corner, an assembly hall at one end, a fountain in the courtyard! What should its name be? We looked at the construction style of the houses of Friesland. By analogy I suggested "Buddhist House." This was the beginning of what later took form as the "Buddhist House in Frohnau."[18]

Dahlke had thought through every detail of life in the Buddhist House. The 1920 edition of the *Neu-Buddhistische Zeitschrift* ("New Buddhist Journal"), a magazine he had created as a self-publishing venture, included articles which dealt with life in the future Buddhist House. Dahlke discussed in detail questions about food and times of eating, even providing an example of a menu.

Besides the work at his surgery he had—on the initiative of the publisher's bookshop Brandu—taken over additional work as a translator of Buddhist texts. During the war there matured in him the knowledge "that there would never be anything more important for Western civilization than the need to become more familiar with Buddhism."[19] This implied the need for Buddhist translations "devoid of external additions," as Dahlke critically described the philological adaptations by Karl Eugen Neumann.[20] The comprehensive *Buddha: Selections from the Pāli Canon,* almost 900 pages long, with translations from the *Sutta Piṭaka* ("Collection of Teachings") came out in 1920. In the same year, Dahlke's translations from the *Digha Nikāya,* and in 1923 those from the *Majjhima Nikāya,* were published by his New Buddhist Press.

The Buddhist House in Berlin

In spite of the possession of the large estate, the plan to build the Buddhist House on Sylt was not realized. Dahlke had heard of plans to build a dam to connect Sylt to the mainland. As a consequence, he gave up his ambitious plans for Sylt as he saw that its remoteness and quietness were in real danger. Dahlke transferred his activities to the outskirts of Berlin. At that time, he could not imagine that only a few years later in 1927 the Hindenburg Dam would be inaugurated by its namesake.

In Berlin—in the outskirts of Frohnau—a well-situated territory, with eleven acres of woodland, was offered for sale to Dahlke. The unmarried doctor wholeheartedly embraced the aim to establish the Buddhist House, despite galloping inflation and difficult times. With the help of numerous donations, which are all listed on the last page of issues of the *Neu-Buddhistische Zeitschrift,* the building work could begin. The architect Max Meyer was responsible for the building of the house, which was situated on a hilltop, and for the planning of a park-like estate.[21]

In August 1924 Dahlke and a few followers, such as Margarete Lau who was Dahlke's housekeeper, Elisabeth and Kurt Fischer and Dahlke's three younger sisters, moved into the house. The first public celebration and official inauguration of the house took place on 12 October 1924. "The aim and intention of the house is…to create a local focal point, a permanent home for Buddhism in the West," Dahlke emphasized in his speech.[22] And he continued:

> It is our intention to create a place and an oasis where individuals who like to meditate can withdraw from daily stress for a period of time in order to collect new strength among like-minded people, although they do not necessarily need to be people with similar beliefs. It is not our intention to establish a monastery.[23]

Dahlke reminded those who were not entirely decided and could not fully identify with a Spartan and meditative style of life that “high and considerable demands” were imposed by the austere life-style, requiring a strong personal resolve of renunciation.[24] Communal life was regulated by a house rule, which residents were obliged to adhere to.[25] As well as the five ethical rules *(pañcaśīla),* the regulations comprised the Buddhist precepts which lay Buddhists normally only observe during Uposatha.[26] Since the house was a “secure place of outer and inner purity,”[27] life in it should always maintain the scrupulousness and seriousness of a solemn Uposatha. A separate set of rules regulated use of the small hermitage. This cell had been set up for meditative retreat in a remote area of the grounds.[28]

“Happiness of renunciation, greatest enjoyment!”[29]

Dahlke had created a world of discipline and mindfulness for himself and his followers in the Buddhist House, but he would only live there for four and a half years. It was there that Dahlke could put his ideals of renunciation, purification, and cultivation of his own personality into practice. Dahlke’s attempt to “apply” Buddhism as a “teaching of reality” culminated in the ascetic domination of the senses and a virtually monastic way of life. Step by step, Dahlke gave up pleasures and “diversions,” such as his predilection for art objects, mathematics, and music in order to come nearer to his ideal of *pabbajjā*, “the path leading to the outside.”[30] Only by renunciation would it be possible to leave conventional, ordinary life behind and to realize a contemplative way of life.

Dahlke’s papers and descriptions of the life around him speak of values and aims such as renunciation, expressed in terms of “detachment from oneself” *(Entselbstung)*[31] and “teaching of oneself” *(Selbsterziehung).* Dahlke followed old paths but gave them a new content, originating from the German romantic ideas of loneliness, self-cultivation, and moral heroism. Though in religion Dahlke took Asian paths, in cultural terms he remained faithful to the exalted ideals of the German educated classes. Expressed in a linguistic analogy, Dahlke’s cultural grammar stayed unchanged, but his religious encyclopedia took on a new vocabulary.[32]

Much in Dahlke’s life confirms such an interpretation. Dahlke himself spoke about the “happiness of renunciation,” which is the central theme of Buddhism, until everything ends up in the peacefulness of the last, imper¬ turbable serenity.[33] Dorothea Girod described, almost admiringly, Dahlke’s self-sufficiency and power of renunciation: he

> slept on a narrow small wooden bench without a mattress. Up to his death Dr. Dahlke had never allowed himself a more comfortable sleeping place…. His way of life was the austere and modest one he was used to from staying in Ceylonese monasteries. There was no kitchen in the Buddhist House. According to his own written menu he lived only on rice, oats, and bread. His diet also included cheese, fruit, tomatoes, and occasionally butter. As a drink he preferred hot water with some milk or chocolate.[34]

Dahlke took on work of almost heroic proportions to finance the construction of the house as well as to continue his literary activities:

> And although he constantly had to find sources of finance for further buildings on the estate, and although he had to cover most of the publishing costs of his books and journals himself, he never gave up his Buddhist regime. He had to work for half the night. He got up at four, or even three, and at the latest by five in the morning to work.[35]

Space is only left to mention some further signs that Dahlke's life and work were based on the ideals of the "romantic way of thinking." Positive values such as retreat into the life of a hermit (monastic life, life on Sylt); the glorification of a simple, lonely life in nature (longing for the South Seas, the poems); the discipline of submitting to the aim of renunciation (an almost monastic life-style); permanent concern about the self in a deep and inscrutable manner *(anattā/no-self);* following Schopenhauer, reverence for genius and anything heroic (for example Dahlke's early literary work "The Book of the Genius" of 1905; his enthusiasm for Beethoven and reception of Nietzsche); finally, as in earlier times, the romanticist enthusiasm for the work of Goethe (especially *Faust II*).

Dahlke tempered the moral heroism of self-cultivation with understanding of "a teaching for reality," which he worked out over the years in full detail. He wrote:

> Buddhism is like a bitter-tasting medicine which a doctor prescribes to a sick person…. There is no real knowledge in Buddhism without a correct way of life; there is also no knowledge without the sacrifice required by renunciation. A Buddhism which does not prepare the way for the elimination of self-centeredness is no Buddhism.[36]

The limitation of "ego-centeredness by renunciation" can be considered a consequence of the ideal of maintaining the concept of the "knowing" and the style of living:

> Morality in Buddhism cannot be identified with ascetism in general, which is merely foolish self-indulgence in the pure pleasure of self-admiration…instead, morality in Buddhism is a result of the understanding of a *what* (what am I?). I *must* practice morality, I *must* practice this style of living, if I want to live in harmony with my insight and be of good conscience towards myself.[37]

Dahlke knew that strong motivation for realizing this sort of "mastery of oneself" is needed.[38] It can only be provided by religion: "Morality is self-constraint; self-constraint needs motives, which can only be provided by religion."[39] Since "the old Religion has failed," Buddhism as "inexorable moral order" can provide the new foundation, based on insight, and "without obligation, dogma, and church."[40] Dahlke said: "Buddhism is developed out of the ruins of a demolished culture of humanity and therefore is the origin of a new cult of humanity."[41] In the context of the First World War, Dahlke said with certainty and conviction: "I know with unshakeable certainty that the future of culture depends on this teaching."[42]

Buddhism as a teaching of reality

Dahlke interpreted Buddhism as "a clear, but sober teaching for life…whose greatness is not based on its idealism, but on reality."[43] It was central for Dahlke to define the idea of "reality." According to Dahlke, Buddha is the "harbinger of reality."[44] Reality is shown by the "existence of real life," organized by "strength" and "material substance."[45] The unity of both these aspects must be experienced by everyone individually; it must be realized "by experience."[46] In his treatise *Der Buddhismus*, Dahlke analysed the notion and "existence of reality"[47] in a complex and elaborate manner. In a distinctive way, he turns against the interpretation and explanation of reality as it is delivered by faith on one hand, and by science on the other. According to Dahlke, the "genuine thinker" has to have an accurate perspective on the fact that "with Buddhism he enters into a world which neither has to be believed nor can be proved, but which experiences itself as *nourishment* and has to be experienced as such."[48]

Dahlke was eager to emphasize this practical aspect of embodying the teaching in one's own particular life-style. It is, stated succinctly, "the actualization, realization of the content of reality in the process of nourishment which defines *Buddhism*"[49] On the solid basis of the Pāli Canon, Dahlke relates his key term, nourishment, to the "five groups of grasping or seizing" (Pāli: *khandha*) and the teaching of *anattā:*

> This is the decisive point of the whole teaching of reality and the whole of Buddhism: this insight into consciousness as a grasping process is a self-contained process. It is an insight, which does not indirectly and empirically take place and which is in itself not immediately arbitrary, but an understanding which is the same as it is taught: a process of nourishment.[50]

As regards ideas and concepts, one can detect borrowings in Dahlke's work from the philosophical teachings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson. An analysis of this aspect has yet to be made, likewise a critical assessment of the ideas projected "onto the East" by Dahlke. Among other things, he believed: "The East proves…that it has created a religion without God, which means a still greater flexibility and a higher content/substance of culture."[51]

The development of the Buddhist House in the following years needs only to be outlined briefly. Alongside the main building Dahlke built a temple in the Japanese style in 1926. At full moon Uposatha ceremonies were carried out. More than a hundred people joined these ceremonies, and so the temple was overcrowded. Numerous famous personalities visited Dahlke and the Buddhist House, among them Count Hermann Keyserling and the Sinhalese modernizer of Theravāda Buddhism, Anagarika Dharmapala.

Not all residents could easily fit into the "purely moral world" created by Dahlke. Margarete Lau left the house after a few months, and others feared the strenuous requirements set by Dahlke. D.Girod remarks in a review: "The spiritual, physical and work requirements were so enormous that only a few pupils could stay on for a longer period of time in his house."[52] Two things Dahlke could not tolerate in his environment were "want of discipline and idle talk."[53] The house and Dahlke seem to have been

regarded as a curiosity among the well-educated bourgeoisie, who saw them as engaging with “the deep wisdom of the East” in the 1920s.[54] However, the “numerous visitors” to the house, who walked through the garden on Sundays, saw it as “only somewhere to sightsee, the whim of ‘a rich man’.”[55] Dahlke embodied the ideal of the self-educated, disciplined renouncer, a person who was truly committed. He practiced living the ideals and aims which the others shared with him, to some extent by acting as their representative.

Ambitious plans and a Buddhist monument on Sylt

Against expectations Dahlke had not yet completely given up his plans for Sylt. Although the Buddhist House was situated on the outskirts of the throbbing national capital, Dahlke felt that “owing to continuous agitation and distraction from the flux of the environment” it was difficult “to keep away from disturbing influences.”[56] He missed the island’s seclusion and loneliness. During his stay on Sylt in the summer of 1927, he had the opportunity “to acquire in a completely lonely and yet not too remote landscape, full of serene beauty, a large estate of approximately forty acres or more.”[57] There he planned to establish a “settlement,” a “secular monastery,” whose inhabitants would follow “rigorously the monastic life-style.”[58]

Partly as a first step toward realizing his plans for a monastery, Dahlke had erected an eleven-foot-high memorial stone venerating the Buddha. The memorial, which was built of the red brick typical of the island, stood on a spacious paved platform, surrounded by fields and moorland. From there the land sloped down to the sandbanks, and also, almost imperceptibly, to the three other sides. Dahlke had shown a special sensibility for the geographic characteristics of the terrain and had utilized it in a special symbolic way. On the eastern side, facing the path and the Wattenmeer, Dahlke had the inscription engraved in brass letters: “‘Namo Buddhāya’. Honour to the Eminent P.Dahlke 1927.” A well-preserved photo, on which the inscription could clearly be seen, was found posthumously among Dahlke’s works. Other pictures show the lonely monument from various directions, the nearest houses being a fair distance away.[59]

The letters were, however, no longer visible by the end of 1932, as the nineteen-year-old Buddhist Helmut Klar could not find them on the occasion of his visit in 1933.[60] Restoration was not planned as Dahlke’s sisters lacked the necessary assets. The monument itself remained standing until the autumn of 1939. Against the background of the militarization by the National Socialists, it was pulled down by the air force in order to create more space for the construction of Westerland Airport. The ruins were completely cleared, and the former monument fell into oblivion. Today in place of Dahlke’s former “thoughtfully beautiful landscape” there is a wellpreserved and cultivated golf course.[61]

Dahlke’s plans for a secular monastery stopped with the erection of the monument. In autumn 1927, he became very ill: “his body literally decayed under the burden of work and his life. He became gradually weaker and more delicate.”[62] Dahlke died at full moon in February of the following year (29 February 1928), “with a smiling face and clear consciousness.”[63] The death was only made public three months later and Dahlke’s body was buried in an unknown spot in the territory. No death certificate was issued. Dahlke,

who was admired by his followers as a preacher of the teachings of the sublime and whose interpretations were held identical with "the redemption act of humanity," wanted to forestall any cult developing around him.[64]

Preserving the house and continuing Dahlke's work

Initially, Dahlke's sister Bertha Dahlke (1866–1947) and the Fischer couple continued his work and preserved the house. Bertha Dahlke had become Dahlke's first student in 1914. She greatly admired her brother and put the "teaching of her brother almost before the Canonical writings."[65] Fairly soon, differences between Bertha Dahlke and the Fischers arose. Elisabeth and Kurt Fischer moved—together with Lavinia, Countess of Monts (1879–1947), who had lived in the house since 1925– into the wooden house which was erected on the territory in 1930.

During the following years, the preservation of the house became a major problem. The financial resources of Dahlke's sisters were very limited. They gradually sold the large estate on Sylt in order to guarantee from the proceeds the preservation of the house and a moderate livelihood for guests and themselves.[66] In view of the encroaching war, Bertha Dalke moved to Sylt. There she died at the age of eighty on 25 January 1947, the eighty-second birthday of her admired brother.

During the early post-war years, the Buddhist House in Berlin was used as temporary accommodation for refugees. Without permanent residents or financial support, it was increasingly threatened by dilapidation. However, in 1957 the German Dharmaduta Society from Sri Lanka bought the house to provide a logistical base and *vihāra* for its "messengers of the *dhamma*" *(dhammaduta).* The society, the declared aim of which was sending well-trained monks to Germany to spread the *dhamma,* was founded by the wealthy Sinhalese Asoka Weeraratna (1917–1999) in 1952. The society renovated the house and sent off the first three monks, chosen from the Vajiraramaya monastery in Colombo, to take up residence in it. During the following decades, numerous Sinhalese monks stayed in the house. Some, such as Gñanawimala, remained for a long time, mastered the German language, and aroused a certain degree of public interest. Others kept themselves rather isolated and had less impact.[67]

Buddhism's rapid growth in Germany and elsewhere since the 1970s has considerably changed the status and impact of the Buddhist House and the German Dharmaduta Society. A recognized and widely acknowledged focal point of Buddhist teaching in West Germany until the mid-1970s, the house and society have since been marginalized by an influx of Zen and Tibetan teachers and traditions. Becoming one among many other Buddhist centers and houses in Berlin,[68] the house aroused less interest and attracted too high a percentage of elderly supporters. In 2000, however, the society was revived with the election of new office-holders. Lengthy articles appeared in the national papers of Sri Lanka, praising the society's works and the considerable impact of the monks in Berlin.[69] A public seminar with keynote speaker Bhikkhu Bodhi commemorated the first anniversary of the death of the society's founder Asoka Weeraratna (July 2000), followed by the publication of new booklets. In 2002, the society celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, issuing a coloured stamp with a painting of the Buddhist House in Berlin as well as a well-produced anniversary souvenir.

Activities also flourished in Berlin, including well-attended *Vesakh* celebrations, public lectures and much more.[70] Finally, in 2001 the society set up an email list issuing news about Buddhist activities and developments around the world, bringing itself to the mind of its many members.

Only time will tell whether these and related activities of the society will have a lasting impact, spreading the *dhamma* in Berlin and generally in Germany. In contrast to Dahlke's times, many Buddhist traditions and centers have become established. Most likely, Buddhism will continue to grow and attract the interest of Western people in the twenty-first century. A single focal point, as claimed by Dahlke as well as by societies such as the German Dharmaduta Society, certainly will not be possible any more—if it ever was—despite the claimant's own assumption of its primacy.

Notes

1 See Prebish 1979, Prebish and Tanaka 1998, Prebish 1999, and Prebish and Baumann 2002. The increasing number of studies researching the field is mirrored by a variety of country-related or thematic bibliographies, most of them available online. See the collections in the online journal *Journal of Global Buddhism,* http://www.globalbuddhism.org/res.html, and *Journal of Buddhist Ethics,* http://jbe.gold.ac.uk/scholar.html.

2 Baumann 1997 on "Buddhism in Protestant Shape."

3 The early history of Buddhism's establishment in Europe can be considered commonplace. See for detailed accounts Batchelor 1994 and Baumann 1995a, 2001, 2002.

4 Quote from Margarete Lau's memories of Dahlke, see Lau, "Erinnerungen," 8th part, 1932/33, 27. A brief life portrait of M.Lau is given in Hecker 1997:167–170. Here and throughout, translations are by Martin Baumann.

5 Quote from Girod, 1972:19.

6 See Geschwister Dahlke, 1931:43.

7 Dahlke, 1925:82.

8 Dahlke as told by M.Lau, "Erinnerungen," 5th part, 1931/32:11. A detailed account of Dahlke's travel report is given in Geschwister Dahlke, 1931:45–55.

9 Dahlke, 1925:82.

10 Ibid., 83.

11 Lau, "Erinnerungen," 6th part, 1931/32, quotes 18. On this see Dahlke himself, 1925:83–84.

12 Fischer, 1930:15.

13 Girod, 1972:4.

14 See the pictures of the typical house in *Helmut Klar,* 1995:25, 28 (also available online).

15 The house, with the so-called library, still exists. In Dahlke's unfortunately very small legacy one can trace a few pictures of the furnishings of those days. I had the opportunity to visit the house in 1995.

16 Girod, 1972:4.

17 Dahlke, 1925:85.

18 Lau, "Erinnerungen," 10th part, 1932/33, 20.

19 Fischer, 1930:15.

20 Fischer, 1930:15.

21 See the drawing of the house and accompanying explanations in Bechert and Gombrich 1984:272.

22 Dahlke, 1925:86. It should not go unmentioned that apart from Dahlke's activities, in south Germany Georg Grimm had become an influential teacher with a fellowship of his own, organized in the Buddhist Parish for Germany; see Hecker 1985:64–66, Baumann, 1995b: 59–63 and Baumann 1995a: 57–58.

23 Dahlke, “Monatsberichte,” 86.
24 Ibid., 87.
25 See “Ordnung für das Buddhistische Haus.” *Die Brockensammlung* 2(1925): 8–10.
26 Rules 7–9 prohibited diversion (e.g. music), luxury articles (perfume etc.) and entertainments (plays etc.). There was no obligation not to eat after midday.
27 Quote from point 3 of the rules of the house, “Ordnung für das Buddhistische Haus,” 8.
28 “Ordnung für die Benutzung der Klause.” *Die Brockensammlung* 3(1926):124–126. Demands for such a retreat seem not to have been made often, however.
29 Dahlke, “Woran ich denke.” *Die Brockensammlung* (1930):42.
30 Quote Dahlke, “Kritisierte Kritik.” *Neu-Buddhistische Zeitschrift,* Autumn (1921): 41. In Buddhism the Pāli term *pabbajjā* from the verb *(p)pa-(v)vaj* denotes to leave the house and go forth, living in renunciation and as a mendicant.
31 Dahlke, 1918:97.
32 Michael Carrithers (1983:26–45) pointed to a similar structure in the case of Anton F.Gueth, ordained as Theravāda monk Nyānatiloka in 1903. Similarly again, Steven Prothero said that Henry Steel Olcott kept his Protestant grammar but took on a Buddhist garb or Theosophist lexicon; see Prothero, 1995; 1996:7–8, 176–177. For the linguistic theory see, among others, Lefebvre, 1998.
33 Dahlke, “Uposatha Dezember 1927.” *Die Brockensammlung* (1929):75.
34 Girod, 1972:6, 11.
35 Lau, “Erinnerungen,” 11th part, 1933/34:20.
36 Dahlke, 1926:34, 36.
37 Ibid., 181; Dahlke’s italics.
38 Dahlke, 1918:86.
39 Dahlke, 1920:17.
40 Dahlke, 1918:84; 1920:16, 23.
41 Dahlke, 1918:84.
42 Ibid., 118.
43 Ibid., 78.
44 Dahlke, 1926:32.
45 Ibid., 42.
46 Ibid., 43.
47 Ibid., 58ff.
48 Ibid., 96; Dahlke’s italics.
49 Ibid., 99; Dahlke’s italics.
50 Ibid., 127.
51 Dahlke, 1918:107.
52 Dorothea Girod, “Gedenkrede zum 100. Geburtstag von Dr. Paul Dahlke in der Kongresshalle Berlin am 31.1.1965,” manuscript 10 pages, quote p. 10.
53 Ibid., 10.
54 Von Kortzfleisch, 1967:333.
55 Lau, “Erinnerungen,” 11th part, 1933/34:20.
56 Dahlke, “Uposatha Oktober 1927,” 65.
57 Ibid., 66.
58 Ibid., 66.
59 For a picture see *Helmut Klar,* 1995:28. Also available online.
60 Klar, 1933:54.
61 Surprisingly, however, the monument is still marked on some maps of the island. See *Inselkarte Sylt 1994/96,* the compilers of which pride themselves on checking the island’s features every two years.
62 Lau, “Erinnerungen,” 11th part, 1933/34:21.
63 Geschwister Dahlke, 1974:85.

64 Quotes Lau, “Erinnerungen,” 11th part, 1933/34:22 and letter by Wilhelm Ritter von Meng to the sisters of Dahlke, see *Die Brockensammlung* (1930):2.
65 Auster, 1995:87. Pictures of Bertha Dahlke are in *Helmut Klar*, 1995:3, 104; also online.
66 For the Buddhist House during the 1930s see German Dharmaduta Society, 1974:66ff. and *Helmut Klar,* 1995:85–90.
67 For developments since the 1950s see the commemoration book German Dharmaduta Society, 1974 and Hecker, 1985:56–58.
68 During the 1990s the number of different Buddhist institutions and groups in Berlin grew to more than forty and the internet list of the German Buddhist Union listed sixty-seven addresses in March 2004. See http://www.dharma.de/ (accessed 24 March 2004).
69 Articles with pictures were published in, for example, *The Sunday Times* (2 July 2000), *The Island* (25 July 2000, 6 August 2000), and *Daily News* (26 July 2000).
70 See the homepage of the Buddhist House, http://www.buddhistisches-haus.de/.

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12
AN OBJECT-RELATIONS PSYCHOLOGY OF ZEN PRACTICE

Franz Metcalf

My life's work

I'm alive and in good health. In this desperate condition I've turned in two directions for a deeper sense of happiness and meaning in this life. First, to Zen Buddhism. Second, to the object-relations psychology of D.W.Winnicott. Over the years I have found myself increasingly drawn to integrating insights from both into a synthetic view of human experience. That is my life's work, as a scholar and a person. I begin this chapter with these statements because an awareness of my personal stakes adds to the reader's ability to judge and incorporate my work.[1] Scholarly work is inevitably biased and personal, no matter the disclaimers attached.[2] I am simply being more honest than most, openly marking myself as a "practitioner-scholar" in our honoree's important characterization (Prebish 1999, 199).

This practitioner-scholar is attempting to integrate Winnicott's theory and Buddhist experience. Looking carefully into contemporary American Zen practice from Winnicott's psychological perspective provides insights into Zen's popularity, hierarchical dynamics and dangers, institutional structures, likely development, and so on. Such insights are one reason why concrete field data, such as I've gathered, need to be grounded in theoretical work and disciplinary overviews (though such data are often lost in the necessarily broad volumes that characterize the birth of new fields, such as the study of Buddhism in the West). And, as particular studies should inform treatments of whole fields, so the field of American Buddhism should inform Buddhist Studies. American Buddhism as a discipline must not be ghettoized in relation to Buddhist Studies, nor in relation to *any* studies, including some¬ thing as seemingly removed as "Psychology of Religion."

Work such as mine brings up the twin disciplinary questions: What is Buddhist Studies? And what is psychology of religion? From those two questions follows a third: When I do what I do in this chapter, which category does my work fall into? I believe the answer is "both," and both fields might benefit from it. It thus finds a happy home in such an interdisciplinary volume as this one.

Selfless practice at ZCLA

Others have previously written on American Zen practice, even on Zen practice at the Zen Center of Los Angeles (henceforward ZCLA), one of the oldest and largest Zen

centers in America. Yet, as far as I know, only one published monograph has grown entirely from field data on practice at ZCLA, and that study, David Preston's excellent *The Social Organization of Zen Practice* (Preston 1988), centered on sociological issues. Given the enormous interest in Zen in American psychological circles, and the even more enormous interest in psychology in American Zen circles, there's a need for nuanced examinations of Zen practice from the perspective of psychology. There exist a few theoretical statements on Zen and psychology, for example Barry Magid's *Ordinary Mind* (Magid 2002), and Joseph Bobrow's chapters in *The Couch and the Tree* (Bobrow 1999) and in *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism* (Bobrow 2003). But, important as these are, they do not grow from methodologically reflective religious studies fieldwork. Since I've tried to do exactly this kind of fieldwork at ZCLA, I offer a glimpse of it here. After giving us that "Buddhist Studies" glimpse, I will analyze it from a "psychology of religion" perspective.

Setting the stage for no-self

A young Sōtō priest, Taizan Maezumi, came from Japan to Los Angeles in 1956 to minister to the needs of Japanese-Americans as a missionary at the downtown temple, Zenshūji, the headquarters of Sōtō Zen in North America. After over ten years there, years in which he fostered his own *zazen* group without great assistance from the temple, Maezumi broke away from Zenshūji. The break occurred in 1967, and Maezumi's group acquired official Sōtō temple status in 1969. With this status, ZCLA became almost completely free of any reliance on Zenshūji. Over the decades, Maezumi acquired two additional *dharma* transmissions, both from Rinzai lineages, and eventually the title, Maezumi Rōshi. ZCLA has been through a serious scandal in 1983 (partially growing out of a culture of alcohol abuse, led by Maezumi), Maezumi's sudden death in 1995, and another scandal that resulted in his first successor as abbot being displaced. Though these events, especially the first, damaged ZCLA, there has been no mass exodus of its students to other teachers or centers. ZCLA continues to be one of the largest Zen institutions in the West.

There have been institutional disaffiliations from ZCLA of prominent centers run by Maezumi's *dharma* heirs, but this gradual variegation does not strike me as a Balkanization, but rather as a step toward positive co¬ operation between differing Zen centers and teachers. For example, Maezumi's first *dharma* heir, Bernie Tetsugen Glassman Rōshi, now leads the Zen Peace-maker Order. Another prominent *dharma* heir, John Daido Loori Rōshi, leads the Mountains and Rivers Order. But nearly all of Maezumi's twelve heirs maintain collegial relations with each other, still occasionally coming together for commemorations and teachings, especially when such occasions strengthen the authority of their shared lineage.

Maezumi was himself active in efforts to organize an American association of Zen centers. I believe this reveals a kind of intentional routinization of charisma on his part. Though I'm confident Maezumi never heard of Max Weber, he had a clear sense of his own power to both promote and stifle the development of his center, his students' centers, and American Zen as a whole. He was genuinely concerned about how to pass his authority on within ZCLA and to the next generation of teachers.

Of course, Maezumi's personal concerns reflect Zen institutions. Zen has, from its Chinese origins, vitally depended for its authority on formal and spiritual acknowledgment of a succession of authority from current teachers back to the Buddha. Here we see its institutional face, close up. The authority of the teacher passes not only into the chosen heir(s), but also into the place of practice. Many teachers were known even in their own lifetimes by the name of the mountain on which their monastery was located. Whole schools (notably Sō to) have been named after mountains. Thus, the teaching institution carries forward the power of the teacher, just as the heir does. The institution, with its physical weight and its ongoing renown, wealth, and power, has in Zen's history served to counterbalance the sometimes eccentric character of charismatic Zen teachers. In fact, it has often nearly overwhelmed such charisma.

That was not the case during my early fieldwork, when Maezumi Rōshi's personal charisma and teaching authority stood at the center of practice at ZCLA. His presence was the chief reason for the success of the center and one reason why I chose to do my research there. While pursuing my research at ZCLA, I became first a "provisional," then a "practicing" member of the center, attending events (chiefly lectures and important, large-scale ritual functions, but also standard *teishōs* [*dharma* talks] and *zazen* practices) over the course of roughly four years. Nevertheless, I did not, to use the anthropological insult, "go native."[3] During this period, in addition to my participant observation, I conducted roughly thirty extensive, psychologically focused interviews with ZCLA members. These interviews and my fieldwork process notes comprise the heart of my data on American Zen practice.

What I learned about no-self

At ZCLA I had thirteen main interpreters (a.k.a., "informants," a word I do not care for), each of whom I spent between three and ten hours interviewing. Our interviews ranged over many issues and emotions. Here I will limn only one central one: of thirteen interpreters, nine described having personal experiences that broke down the boundaries of the self. And, of the four who did not, two are the past and present heads of the lineage. One must assume they have had powerful no-self experiences to have been given *dharma* transmission and reach this topmost status. I found such no-self experiences to be the *sine qua non* of advanced ZCLA practice.[4]

I cannot transcribe here all my interpreters' descriptions of no-self experiences. Still, I want to let them speak briefly (though anonymously) for themselves. In this section, all the data come from my interview notes. Material within quotation marks stands exactly as spoken. Material without quotes was paraphrased at the time of writing my field notes.

Several of my interpreters described the practice of Zen as slowly widening the perceived experiencer or self. Though this may not yet sound like "no-self," let's begin here. I asked B how his practice had changed over the years and he responded, "It's broadened. In other words the sense of selfcenteredness has lessened somewhat—or at least the sense of self has broadened." I asked a similar question of E, who gave a response that echoed B's sense of slow unfolding: "What I thought it was, it turns out that it wasn't. That enlightenment doesn't come from outside us. You just keep going and something else opens up."

This language of broadening and especially opening is of course present in Zen texts and is central to Zen's ethos as taught in America. My interpreters, though, were emphatic in making sure I understood their belief that a mere intellectual appropriation of the tradition means nothing. They must open themselves existentially, and they believed they were doing so. As F said, "What does it mean to be a human being? I sat with that for nine years until an answer popped up: to include everything."

As F says, a true "human being" (perhaps Linji's "true person with no rank" [see Watson 1993, 13]) includes much more than this lump of red flesh; a true human being includes "everything." What does it mean for these practitioners to include everything? There's a sense in which the self is worn away or diffused through experience in their practice. B wrestled with what the self is:

B: I think originally it comes from ideas. What did you say, ideas? Well, definitely in back of it all is this sense of unknown. And from there come actions, and certain things I leave alone.

ME: I asked this question to see what Buddhist discourse they might give, but people answer it more personally.

B: Right. Well that's the only way to regard the self. It's not a philosophical construct; it's who you are. And who knows who that self is, anyway?

ME: It's about dispelling illusions rather than coming up with a bottom line.

B: Right. The bottom line comes up of itself.

Again, the process sounds natural, though the end-state of the self remains unclear. Another interpreter tried to describe what the self consists of. E says the answer is ideas, but quickly adds actions are so obvious she didn't mention them. She then says "I think less about that. I just do things. It must sound so boring!" I assure her she is far too vibrant to be boring. E goes on, "I think it's relations, the way I relate."

ME: But what about the classic Sōtō stance of just experiencing emptiness?

E: But you do. Even *that* is it. Of course it's that thing and everything else, too. It's boundless; that's my experience of it. *[E calls the sudden illuminations merely a part of gradual practice, something wonderful but adds]* What isn't? I think you can't have any sort of religious path without experiences like that. *[Pause]* Zen brings all of that right down to earth. Though they say "nothing holy," everything is made holy by saying nothing is. And you don't have to put in the word "holy."

E asserts a path expanding the self toward boundlessness but also everydayness. Near the end, she refers to the story of Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu, *Blue Cliff Record* case 1, where Bodhidharma claims everything is *śūnya* (open or empty); nothing is holy. E says this reveals everything is "holy" and also that we do not need the word "holy." If we take her literally and remove the word "holy" from her statement, then she is saying "though they say 'nothing', everything is made by saying nothing is." That is a beautiful way of expressing a Mahāyāna āna interpretation of *prafītya-samutpāda* and a beautiful evocation of no-self experience.

I quote P now to share and honor her articulation of the fear often experienced as work on the personal self opens out into work on no-self in Zen practice (and psychotherapy):

> But after all, Zen says that the little self—okay, let's put it this way, to use the metaphor of master and servant: we confuse master and servant. In the realization of Zen we become intimate with the master and establish the correct relationship between master and servant, and integrate, we integrate that perspective. Whereas in the realm of psychology there's not a recognition of the master, the existence of the master, so consequently everybody thinks the servant runs the show.
>
> What happens for many people—including me—is that when the servant starts to become aware of the master, the servant becomes terrified and a great fear can arise at the collapse of the boundary or a crack in the boundary. So many people have a first glimpse and may run away.

Several of my interpreters mentioned this kind of fear and aversion, though P was the only one to express this fear in Linji's classic terms of servant and master (or guest and host). Y commented "Without the Zen contexts, certain experiences are considered insane, forms of psychosis. The experience of being one with the universe. At least in this context it's entertainable." R mentioned both play and fear in her very early no-self experiences: "I had an experience like peeling away the layers of an onion, and I wasn't anything I thought I was." R remarks that this is a common experience in Zen practice and can be welcomed, but at five it was terrifying. "It really scared me, so I stopped playing with these experiences."

For advanced practitioners, no-self experience can be a spiritual struggle, but slowly becomes more like play. In fact several of my interpreters used the very word "play" to describe it, a word central to Winnicott's vision of human development, as we'll see in this chapter's next section. We've just heard R say that early in her life she was "playing" with no-self, but that it was also "terrifying." Decades later, she took up no-self experience again. Here's a particularly rewarding description of her current practice:

> But the minute you have expectations you're in trouble. Because you're grasping, know what I mean?…I don't look at meditation that way: it's playing. It's fun. I couldn't exist without this. This is *life*!

R is bubbling with enthusiasm and gesturing under her flowing wrap. And I'm thinking "Yes! Winnicott is my friend!"

As this Zen play continues, the practitioner lives more fully from a no-self place. The majority of my senior interpreters described how, at a certain point in their practice, their sense of opening began to transform into a sense of disconnecting or deconstructing. This is a crucial step forward in Zen practice, one inseparable from no-self. Here is an exchange with F:

ME: How is your identity or self constructed? From actions, ideas, or something else?…

F: I think I'm having trouble with the word "constructed." My experience of myself is how I live. I don't see myself as constructed because I'm deconstructed continually. I'm experiencing it now. I could name adjectives that describe the life I live, but they're just containers for something that cannot be contained.

Here and elsewhere, F described her experience as being genuinely uncontainable, liberatingly unintegrated. Here is M on the ecstasy of her practice:

> That's the great treasure: revealing that this moment is the great compassionate heart. That can't be contained by the intellect. It bursts the bonds of human mental capacity. I practice Zen *[M gestures, opening her hand to the world]* to let go of any barrier between myself and that realization.

This sense of no barriers is central to practice at ZCLA. Undoubtedly, this usage consciously echoes the phrase *wumen*, which literally means "no barrier" and is the name of a prominent Chan teacher and the most prominent *kōan* collection in use at ZCLA, the *Wumenguan* ("The Barrierless Barrier," or "Gateless Gate").

Employing another way of describing such openness, P spoke about her no-self experience, saying it's:

> possible for a human being to drop away and the experience be of only *zazen*. I can do this now, voluntarily, to just experience you, the sight and sound of the experience. But, Franz, I have to say I have experienced this. When I had that enlightenment experience it was unmediated. It wasn't mediated until after, wasn't mystic until after.

P here, in describing her no-self experience, displays a strong critique of mysticism that I found in almost all my interpreters and in ZCLA teachers. Though they did not claim that there was no valued mystical experience in their practice, they uniformly argued for its *irrelevance*. Instead of *samādhi* experiences or even "sudden" or "peak" experiences (to use, respectively, descriptors from Mahāyāna āna and humanistic psychology), ZCLA members strive to continuously embody awakening. This is, as many were happy to tell me, their way of embodying what Dōgen called *shu-shō ichinyo*, "the oneness of practice-awakening."

Here is another example of an interpreter trying to efface the distinction between mystical and ordinary experience. I take this from F's description of what she claimed was a common state for her:

> When you drop out of ordinary perception, spacetime breaks down, the inner/outer distinction breaks down, rationality breaks down. So I would look at it on a continuum. To me, *this* is a totally mystical experience *[F looks at her finger, crooking and straightening it]*… People get stuck in the mystic experience, but the mystic experience will open them to that experience.

When F concludes with "that experience," she's referring to experience much like the non-separation experienced prior to the constructions of self and other, potentially prior even to normal modes of sensual perception. In other words, she's describing something like regressive, infantile experience. Yet she's describing the cognitively, emotionally *developed* person having this experience, not the neonate. This experience is, in fact, *not*

regressive, a fact P and F (both psychotherapists) were insistent on. My own observations confirm this assertion.

Faithfulness to the maturity and self-understanding revealed by my advanced interpreters requires seeing their no-self experience as post-personal, or transpersonal, rather than pre-personal. If we can see their experience this way, we may be able to view it psychologically, and yet avoid reducing it to “regression.” We may even be able to avoid reducing it to “mere” psychological development, and instead enrich that developmental psychology itself with insights from Buddhist experience. But is this possible to do from the perspective of contemporary psychology? My answer is, yes, this can be done from a Winnicottian perspective.

A bridge between Buddhist Studies and psychology

Building the bridge

The diffusion of the self into no-self experience happens as practitioners increasingly experience the perspectives of others in art works, ideas, and relationships, and, even more powerfully, in the perspective of *no one at all* during meditation. My research shows how ZCLA’s religious environment allows all these encounters, engendering no-self through shared rituals in the *zendō* (meditation room), the intimacy of *dokusan* (private interview with the teacher), and especially *zazen* (seated meditation). (For a full description, see Metcalf 1997.)

Though *kōan* practice is integral to the *dharma* transmission at ZCLA, *zazen* is central to all practitioners there. *Zazen* redirects constructive mental processes into a mode that is in a sense deconstructive as meditators recreate their interpretative frameworks through new and less directed modes of brain activity. Brain patterns alter and those giving rise to self experience reform *enduringly* into new patterns giving rise to no-self experience (see Austin 1999). In this process, some meditators assert they are approaching experiencing reality itself, unfiltered.[5] This neatly approaches the soteriological goal of the erasure of the illusion of the self. I hardly need to add that the erasure of this illusion does not mean the annihilation of any ontological reality.[6]

Zen practice, at least in America, gives its practitioners a new “home,” as many practitioners literally told me. ZCLA provides a religious “potential space.” The parental relationship of Maezumi Rōshi with his students was obvious and gave practitioners the balance of attention and freedom found in good enough mothering. The leadership style of Egyoku Nakao Rōshi, Maezumi Rōshi’s current successor, is perhaps less parental and more therapeutic, with an emphasis on the *sangha* providing a “holding environment,” as the community share their illusions and practices. As they share, they continue to make progress, provided their environment remains supportive and they have the inner capacity to play in it. (Here we see the psychological power of Zen teachers and the danger of their being ill-trained in the dynamics their relationships with students mobilize. This gives some insight into the frequency of teacher scandals in Western Zen centers—two at ZCLA alone.[7]) Their journeys end in the diffusion of the “transitional object” self into the potential space, an achievement that goes beyond being “only sane” and approaches

awakening, or even nirvana (though this is a word I do not recall ever hearing spoken at ZCLA, except possibly in jokes).

The language of the previous paragraph will have sounded foreign to many readers of this volume. This is because we've entered the new territory of object-relations psychology, specifically the theory of D.W.Winnicott, one of object relations' pioneers and still one of its most influential figures, above all in matters of religion. The remainder of this chapter will flesh out the previous paragraph's vision, extending Winnicott's work into the sphere of contemporary Zen practice in an attempt to make a theoretically coherent bridge between psychology and Buddhist Studies.

Crossing the bridge

Winnicott's psychology is a leading form of "object-relations" theory, a loose set of radical revisions to Freud's classical psychoanalysis championed by first- and second-generation psychoanalysts in England. Like all object-relations psychologists, Winnicott saw the human person as fundamentally relational. The shift in object relations, from earlier psychoanalysis, thus lies in seeing the person as motivated not by drives, but by interpersonal needs. The full significance of this change may not strike us at first, but a moment of thought reveals its power. When we see human beings as interpersonally oriented from the very beginning, they cease to be the monads of Freud's description, and become instead necessarily complex and evolving creatures, whose developmental endpoint is unknown.

Winnicott famously held it counterproductive to think of an infant apart from its mother. He wrote (Winnicott 1989a, 54), "there is no such thing as an infant because when we see an infant at this early stage we know that we will find infant-care with the infant as part of that infant-care." In this sentence we have the kernel of Winnicott's developmental vision: the infant actually *begins* with no-self experience. The mother acts as the environment that holds the infant's life and self together; in her eyes the infant sees itself. Her "primary maternal preoccupation," her desire, like the infant's, is that it get what it wants, when it wants it (Winnicott 1958b). In fact, there is essentially no "it" at all at this stage, without the mother to provide "its" continuity. "There is no such thing as an infant"; it is no-self.

The mother reflects back the infant's originally "formless" experience, allowing the infant to eventually organize a provisional self. Note that this use of the word "formless" comes not from Zen's *Platform Sūtra*;[8] it is Winnicott's own word, as we will see. In mothering, in therapy, in Zen practice, formlessness becomes integrated into the person, and only in formlessness is there creativity. For Winnicott, formless experience is what makes life worth living.

For Winnicott, "organized nonsense is already a defence, just as organized chaos is a denial of chaos" that precedes the self (Winnicott 1971d, 55). At the bottom of experience is always chaos, and a good enough mother or therapist or Zen teacher lets this in and contains it. Speaking of searching for meaning, Winnicott writes:

> the searching can come only from desultory formless functioning, or perhaps from rudimentary playing, as if in a neutral zone. It is only here,

> in this unintegrated state of the personality, that that which we describe as creative can appear.
>
> (ibid., 64)

As I've said, this holding is the root of psychological development. The good enough mother holds the formless experience of the infant. As the infant matures, she allows it to emerge from this undifferentiated continuum of experience. The infant loses and mourns its felt non-duality with her, a part of itself. Facing this optimal failure of the mother, the infant soothes and consoles itself through organizing behavior into rituals symbolizing her. These often coalesce into one object, the transitional object, that both joins (being regressive and soothing) and separates (being developmental and assertive) the infant and mother (Winnicott 1971e). Winnicott clarifies:

> It is not the object, of course, that is transitional. The object represents the infant's transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to the mother as something outside and separate.
>
> (ibid., 14–15)

The transitional object is found/created in the potential space the relationship with the mother has provided. This potential space is the capacity in the infant for play. "The baby's separating-out of the world of objects from the self is achieved only through the absence of a space between, the potential space being filled in in the way that I am describing" (Winnicott 1971b, 108). Thus, the potential space is empty in the way ZCLA members describe the universe as empty. Both are an empty space "which the baby, child, adolescent, adult may creatively fill with playing, which in time becomes the enjoyment of the cultural heritage" (ibid.). So "there is a direct development from transitional phenomena to playing, and from playing to shared playing, and from this to cultural experiences" (ibid.).

Winnicott devoted the last 25 years of his life to, as he wrote:

> studying the substance of *illusion*, that which is allowed to the infant, and which in adult life is inherent in art and religion…. We can share a respect for illusory experience, and if we wish we may collect together and form a group on the basis of the similarity of our illusory experiences. This is a natural root of grouping among human beings.
>
> (Winnicott 1971e, 3)

ZCLA members share the root illusions of Zen experience and so live creatively. For Winnicott, only this is full life, something which goes far beyond mere health or sanity. Winnicott famously wrote, "We are poor indeed if we are only sane" (Winnicott 1958c, 150n). We must always welcome illusion to live creatively.

> It is these cultural experiences that provide the continuity in the human race that transcends personal existence. I am assuming that cultural experiences are in direct continuity with play, the play of those who have not yet heard of games.

(Winnicott 1971a, 100)

Here we find again that word, “play,” the formless freedom that “transcends personal existence.” Winnicott critiques a reified self whose “life is lived through the compliant false self, and the result clinically is a sense of unreality” (Winnicott 1989b, 43). By contrast, play—which at ZCLA we find in formless *zazen* and in free interactions with teachers—leads beyond the self, perhaps to something like reality.[9]

In this assertion I am going beyond Winnicott as the assertion goes beyond the self. I am here seeing the self as part of a developmental line of transitional behavior leading to full play in the potential space. This line begins in formlessness before the self and extends in formlessness beyond it. This makes the self itself a transitional object in Winnicott’s sense, though he never made this claim.

Experiences of *zazen* and other forms of unselfconscious experience threaten the cohesion of the personal self. This threat causes the experiencer of the personal self, the conscious “I,” to react as the experiencer of the nursing couple self did as the mother optimally failed it. Each clings to a soothing transitional object to console itself during the process of weaning the experiencer away from an older mode of experiencing. What is lost is preserved through the transitional object, a structure—in a sense *the* structure—of personal experiencing. We can see the transitional object self as a symbol of the lost part of the illusory adult experience: the reified, ongoing, individual “I.” This symbol both joins and separates the evolving no-self and the coherence of personal experience. So the first and last transitional objects are functionally parallel. The first helps the transition from an illusory sense of non-duality to seeming duality. The second helps the transition from an illusory sense of duality to seeming non-duality.

Most of us develop senses of self very early because we have incursions of no-self all the time and we very efficiently ignore or deny them. Neurological studies, such as those described in James Austin’s *Zen and the Brain* (Austin 1999), support this claim that no-self experience recurs in several common experiences, especially borderline states between sleep and waking. Love experiences also threaten personal coherence, and Tibetans claim sneezes, orgasms, and falling asleep do, as well. All this supports viewing the self as a reaction to the fragmenting threat of no-self experience throughout life. In the face of such experience the transitional object self is prized and strengthened, especially early in life. This strengthening is also basic evolutionary adaptedness.

Yet the transitional self is not merely transitional *from* threatening no-self experience, it is also transitional *to* liberating no-self experience. As the nascent personal self was made possible through the symbol of the lost mother/breast, the nascent no-self is made possible through the symbol of the lost personal self. Paradoxically, this means “play” in the potential space is both threatening and liberating, as we’ve briefly seen in quotes from my interpreters. Despite the threat, given enough time and practice, ZCLA members do give up this last transitional object. Like the first transitional object, the last one (the personal self) is not destroyed but rather diffused into the potential space of relationships, of culture, and of religious experience. Personal experience is transcended and yet endures, increasingly empty and open.

The other shore

Winnicott of course does not use the term “no-self” in his published work. The closest analogue to it might be his idea of “unintegration.” Infants commonly experience unintegration when their mothers provide an environment that holds them together so they do not have to themselves. But Winnicott also explores unintegration as a positive experience where persons can, in certain safe environments (often shared with others, as we see at ZCLA), shuck their hard-won integration and experience a peaceful, open formlessness. In such a state of unintegration, one stands outside the developmental line of nonintegration-leading-to-integration. One is alone and yet unbounded, undefended and yet unthreatened (Winnicott 1965a).

My interpreters describe their most valued experiences in just this kind of Winnicottian language. As we’ve seen, they find no-self experience in *zazen*, but they also find it in the *dokusan* room and in everyday actions (such as crooking a finger). This suggests no-self experience does not have to ignore or denigrate pleasures or relationships. Quite the contrary, awakened experience ought logically to be intensely relational, continuing existing relational matrices but now holding them within a larger sphere of experience. This includes relationships with other practitioners and, crucially, with the Zen teacher. In this way, the ZCLA *sangha* and Maezumi Rōshi and his successors foster no-self experience. The *zendō* is a potential space, as is the *dokusan* room. Bowing, chanting, the physicality of *zazen*, wearing the enveloping warmth of traditional robes, all these are transitional activities that echo the (physical as well as psychical) holding environment provided by the good enough mother. Taken together, we can see ZCLA’s various dimensions as powerful generators of the unintegration that is no-self experience.

In the end-state they produce, rather than *having* relationships with others, the practitioner may experience (at least ideally) directly *being* those relationships, without a false boundary of consciousness separating self and other. This may not mean one experiences the other *as* oneself, but perhaps it means directly experiencing something like Indra’s Net, experiencing self and other reflecting each other and being *in* each other at once.[10] My interpreters—whose practice frequently calls upon them to chant and study the *Heart Sūtra*—tell me this is the very experience of “form is emptiness, emptiness is form,” in other words, “self is no-self, no-self is self.”

In such experience, the world is reinvested with the energy previously bound up within the sense of self and the brain functioning required to maintain that sense. The world becomes play, play that springs from wisdom and compassion. The fully realized Zen no-self blooms as the apotheosis of the object-relations self: one whose attachments are infinitely extended and whose “self now consists solely *of* them. The false self completely purged, the true self explodes into its relations.

Or, to tie myself in Zen style to the Buddha ancestors, here is “Pilgrimage Record” 284, adapted from the *Record of Yunmen* (App 1994):

> Tiantong said, “If you haven’t understood, you get involved in everything around you.”

Teacher Yunmen countered, “If you *have* understood, you get involved in everything around you!”

Notes

1 Here I would like to thank this chapter’s first reader, Joseph Bobrow, for his comments, all of which have improved my work.

2 For a spirited and comprehensive defense of this claim, see George Devereux’s neglected masterpiece *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences* (Devereux 1967).

3 Note that, as I wrote in the body of the text, I do not believe that “going native” would have invalidated my data or my conclusions on ZCLA. Rather, I inform you of my non-native-but-deeply-sympathetic state as support for my status as “practitioner-scholar.”

4 This is so even though ZCLA is officially a Sōtō temple. To understand this, we must remember that Maezumi Rōshi had three *dharma* transmissions, two of which were Rinzai. In fact, due to his double Rinzai transmissions, the *kōan* teaching system used by Maezumi and at least several of his successors is possibly the most elaborate in all of Western Zen. Maezumi and now Egyoku Rōshi both certainly have emphasized “gradual cultivation,” practice-as-awakening, following Dōgen. Yet ZCLA’s spiritual culture also seems to require “sudden awakening,” at least in opening insights and ecstatic experiences, as my interpreters described.

5 Notable here is the work of Jack Engler, who has asserted for nearly 20 years the possibility of *vipassanā* meditators (and perhaps others) experiencing just this actual reality and nothing more. See Engler’s most recent work for his assertion, a rebuttal, and his only slightly qualified reassertion (Engler 2003a, 2003b).

6 The ongoing complex of karmic relations (object relations?) that looks like an *ātman* is never in danger, nor is the existence of the world. A naive misunderstanding of these doctrines lies at the root of many Americans’ misgivings about Buddhism, despite direct refutation of this view in the *sūtras* and commentaries for the last 2000 years. That seemingly willful misunderstanding of *anātman* might itself be a fruitful subject for psychological inquiry, as *anātman* has already been for philosophical inquiry (for instance in Collins 1982 and Harvey 1995.)

7 Maezumi Rōshi’s 1983 scandal involved alcohol and sex. During my original fieldwork, another crisis occurred, arising from misbehavior of Maezumi Rōshi’s first successor as abbot, *again* involving alcohol and sex. In both cases, many practitioners felt violated, as if a parent had abused them and the family had been co-dependent. Practitioners’ reactions often were much stronger than they would have imagined. Such feelings reveal the Zen environment not as always healthy and liberating, but as potentially regressive, constricting, and compliant. This is especially so when teachers are not prepared to work with the volatile dynamics of transference and counter-transference. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, ZCLA’s scandals echo those in quite a number, possibly even a *majority*, of other American Zen centers.

8 The *sūtra*’s verses on formless practice are well known. Importantly, section 36 of the *sūtra* suggests that householder practice is a perfectly suitable way to pursue the *dharma*. Indeed, the very formlessness the *sūtra’s* author prizes so highly militates against withdrawal from the world. Winnicott would surely have reveled in this Chan formlessness. (See Yampolsky 1967, 159f.)

9 Of course on the ultimate level, according to Zen philosophy, what corresponds to “reality” is also “illusion.” There are no students at ZCLA having experiences, and no teachers to have interactions with. My interpreters were aware of and comfortable with this paradox. Winnicott—who also was comfortable with paradox—was surely aware that the root of the English word “play” goes back to the Latin *ludere,* from which we also derive the word

"illusion." For Winnicott, as well as for my interpreters, it is precisely in these real illusions that we live most fully.

10 Indra's Net has become so widely used as a Buddhist metaphor of the universe that I almost didn't employ it here. But it remains the right metaphor whether you still treasure its jewels or whether you feel caught in its clinging strands.

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13
TWO BUDDHISMS FURTHER CONSIDERED[1]

Paul David Numrich

Over the past century and a half, many observers have recognized a "two Buddhisms" dichotomy, framed in broad ethnic terms, that characterizes the Buddhist presence in the West. Two types of Buddhists pursue substantively different perspectives and practices of Buddhism—ethnic Asians born into a Buddhist cultural heritage, and non-Asian converts to Buddhism. Critical reflection on this two Buddhisms dichotomy dates only to the early 1990s, but since then it has exercised the field of contemporary Buddhist Studies. This chapter presents an analytical history and critical assessment of the two Buddhisms notion. I will recommend that advocates and critics alike acknowledge the value of the notion, and that they direct their energies toward advancing the field in creative ways, both within and outside the two Buddhisms paradigm.

First, a clarification of how the related concepts of ethnicity, race, and religion will be used in this chapter (see Stout 1975; Burkey 1978; Smith 1978; Abramson 1980; Becker 1988; Conzen *et al*. 1992; Hammond and Warner 1993). Ethnicity, or ethnic group identity, is based on perceived shared origins and cultural characteristics, a collective sense of peoplehood and belonging, a mutual acknowledgment that "we" and "they" differ in substantive ways. Ethnic identity is socially constructed rather than primordial, dynamic rather than static, continually negotiated and reconfigured through interaction among dominant and minority groups in society. Ethnic identities are often created, enhanced, or submerged under larger categories through the migration process as groups find their place in a new society. In the case of ethno-racial groups, ethnic identity is linked primarily to physical characteristics; for ethno-religious groups, ethnic identity is linked primarily to religion. Particular ethnic-Asian Buddhist populations, such as Chinese, Japanese, or Vietnamese Buddhists, and the general category of ethnic-Asian Buddhists combine both racial and religious identifying characteristics. In the context of this chapter, the term "ethnic Asians" and its adjectival form "ethnic-Asian" refer to Asian Buddhist minority populations in the West.

Analytical history of the two Buddhisms notion

The "two Buddhisms" of ethnic Asians and non-Asian converts were recognized long before the term gained its current content in the early 1990s. Before the 1990s, the notion typically functioned as an unexamined assumption about the societies in which Buddhists lived, and thus generated little descriptive or analytical reflection. Some scholars who acknowledged the existence of the two Buddhisms employed other typologies in

discussing the Buddhist presence in the West. In his study of Victorian-era Buddhism in the United States, originally published in 1992 as critical reflection on how the two Buddhisms typology began, Thomas Tweed categorized Euro-American and Asian-American Buddhists as substantively different kinds of Buddhists, although he recognized mutual influences between the two types (2000, 34–9). This broad ethnic divide was historically embedded in social and legal structures that targeted the Asian "strangers from a different shore" for discriminatory treatment (Takaki 1998). "[I]n response to the exclusionary impulse," writes historian of American religion Martin Marty,

> the Chinese and Japanese who were chiefly in California and elsewhere on the West Coast, developed cultural enclaves which made them seem only more remote and mysterious. Religion was a reinforcer of these enclaves and, since it was an alien religion to people with biblical heritages, it only served to increase the distance between peoples.
>
> (1986, 107; cf. Mann *et al.* 2001)

Chinese immigrants to the United States in the 1800s and early 1900s, whose syncretistic folk religion included Buddhist elements, established temples often derisively labeled "joss houses" ("joss" being a term imported from Asia, a corruption of the Portuguese word for god, *deus*). As Rick Fields notes, "Caucasians rarely visited the joss houses, and then only as tourists at some of the more public temples in Chinatown" (1992, 75; cf. Sung 1967, 130–2). In some instances, Chinese temples hired a white superintendent "in order to disarm any possible white critics of a strange, 'heathen' place of worship" (Wells 1962, 20). The Japanese community in the United States during the same period established a denominational structure for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism—initially called the Buddhist Mission of North America, later the Buddhist Churches of America—which has always maintained a primarily ethnic-Japanese identity (Ogura 1932; Tajima 1935; Radin 1946; Rust 1951; Horinouchi 1973; Kashima 1977; Tuck 1987). Contrasting the institutional roles of the Buddhist temple in Japan and America, sociologist Tetsuden Kashima writes: "In Japan, the temples in the community are viewed predominantly as religious organizations; in America, the [Buddhist Mission of North America temples] served as a place not only for religious solace, but also for social gatherings that preserved communal ethnic ties" (1977, 113–14). This resulted in a functional ethnic parallelism between Asian and non-Asian Buddhists, as Louise Hunter summarizes:

> There were some Caucasians in Hawaii and on the mainland who sympathized with the teachings of Buddhism and who had even, it was said, expressed an interest in the priesthood. But these haoles [whites], it was observed, did not feel at home in most Buddhist "churches." Architecture and religious artifacts which remained distinctly Oriental were thought to alienate Occidentals.
>
> (1971, 205–6)

Initiatives to develop a non-ethnocentric form of Japanese Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in Hawaii in the 1920s and 1930s were eventually quashed by a bishop "desirous of

restricting Jodo Shinshu Buddhism to the Japanese" (Kashima 1977, 57). Subsequent calls for the Buddhist Churches of America to engage in active outreach to non-Japanese Americans have not garnered significant success (Kashima 1977, 208–9; Bloom 1990, 1998).

Mixed-ethnic exceptions proved the rule of ethnic parallelism during the early period of Buddhism in the United States. For instance, a group calling itself the Dharma Sangha of Buddha was formed in 1900 in San Francisco, and attracted as many as 20 Japanese and 25 non-Japanese members at its height (Fields 1992, 145). But ethnic parallelism generally prevailed, even under a single organization's roof, as in Nyogen Senzaki's zendos in San Francisco and Los Angeles in the early 1900s where Japanese and non-Japanese followers gathered on different nights (Fields 1992, 181), and in programming for interested whites provided by some Jodo Shinshu temples on the American mainland, such as the Three Treasures Society established in 1900 (Rust 1951, 143–5). Tellingly, the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893, ignored the traditionalist Buddhism practiced by Chinese and Japanese immigrants in the United States in favor of a modernist Buddhism palatable to white intellectuals and a curious public enamored of "Oriental" philosophies (Jackson 1981, 243–61). The contemporary ill-treatment of the immigrant Chinese and Japanese populations was broached at the Parliament (Barrows 1893, 88, 167–8, 444–50), but no serious attention was given to their brand of Buddhism.

A few observers prior to the 1990s reflected intentionally on the two Buddhisms dichotomy, if only minimally. Historian of religion Joseph Kitagawa distinguished "Oriental" Buddhists, whom he considered "ethnic religious groups" analogous to Scandinavian Lutherans, and non-Asians who found Buddhism intellectually attractive, depicting the latter unflatteringly in these words:

> Buddhism tends to attract those Caucasian-Americans who do not fit into their own society and religious tradition or those who try to use Buddhism for non-religious ends, etc. The last problem is especially acute in reference to Zen Buddhism, which has fascinated many young non-conformists in America.
>
> (Kitagawa 1967, 55)

Kosho Yamamoto (1967), a Japanese traveler in the mid-1960s, simply noted the presence of immigrant Asian Buddhist populations while providing a detailed description of the "new" Buddhists of Europe (that is, European converts). Robert Ellwood's (1983) contribution to a special issue of the journal *Concilium* on new religious movements mentioned that followers of Asian religions in North America, including Buddhism, fell into two categories, "immigrants and their descendants" and "occidentals," each having a quite different "temper." In another publication, Ellwood summarized that "North American Buddhism has long had two strands, ethnic and occidental," which have pursued different institutional trajectories "despite occasional exchanges" (1987, 438). Around the same time, E.Allen Richardson focused his book, *East Comes West,* on immigrants in order to redress the imbalance of scholarly and media attention devoted to "indigenous Caucasian devotees" of Buddhism and other Asian religions in North America (1985, xiii, 179, n. 1).

Other observers prior to the 1990s acknowledged the existence of two Buddhisms broadly framed in ethnic terms but chose another categorization scheme in analyzing the Buddhist presence in the West. Throughout her seminal book, *Buddhism in America*, Emma Layman distinguished “Orientals and non-Orientals” and “American versus Asian Buddhists” (for example, 1976, 262–3)—but, when drawing a portrait of America’s Buddhists, she proposed a typology of “three major styles,” by which she seems to have meant distinctive aspects of Buddhist practice and organizational polity, an approach she found more helpful than a typology “according to sect” (Layman 1976, 252): (1) “evangelistic” (the Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai International movement), (2) “meditational” (Zen and other groups that emphasize meditation practices), and (3) “church” (the Buddhist Churches of America and other ethnic-Asian groups). In his overview of Buddhism in the West, Heinz Bechert (1984) explained how the large, early Asian emigration to the United States had created a different Buddhist presence there than in Europe—in effect, a two Buddhisms dichotomy—although Bechert did not employ this notion systematically in surveying the American Buddhist landscape. The same can be said of other surveys that implicitly or explicitly recognized ethnicity as a salient factor for Buddhist groupings in the West (for example, Leidecker 1957; Benz 1976; Rajavaramuni 1984).

The early 1990s marked a watershed in the evolution of the two Buddhisms notion. As we have seen in the foregoing overview, most pre-1990s observers recognized the substantive differences between ethnic-Asian and convert Buddhism yet engaged in minimal reflection about the implications of this dichotomy. Beginning in the 1970s, a great deal of scholarly attention was directed at convert Buddhism as a “new religious movement,” to the neglect of the ethnic-Asian wing of the two Buddhisms (Numrich 1996, xxi–xxii). This all changed in the wake of a controversy that placed the two Buddhisms dichotomy squarely at the center of scholarly and popular discourse about the Buddhist presence in the United States.

The controversy began with an editorial in the second issue (Winter 1991) of *Tricycle*, a periodical aimed at a convert Buddhist readership. Editor-in-chief Helen Tworkov (1991), reflecting on the emergence of what she labeled “American Buddhism,” made the following claim:

> The spokespeople for Buddhism in America have been, almost exclusively, educated members of the white middle class. Meanwhile, even with varying statistics, Asian-American Buddhists number at least one million, but so far they have not figured prominently in the development of something called American Buddhism.

This prompted a strong rebuttal from Ryo Imamura, a third-generation Japanese-American Buddhist priest. In a letter to the editor, dated April 1992 but never published in *Tricycle*, Imamura objected to the fact that “Tworkov has restricted ‘American Buddhism’ to mean ‘white American Buddhism’.” Imamura rehearsed the historical struggles of Asian-American Buddhists in a racist society and their significant contributions to “the growth of American Buddhism” despite the social forces arrayed against them. “We Asian Buddhists have…everything that white Buddhist centers have and perhaps more,” Imamura asserted (in Prebish 1993, 190–1).

This simmering controversy aired publicly in 1993 and 1994. Imamura's letter and a response by Tworkov were included in coverage by an obscure periodical called *The Sangha Newsletter* of the Wider Shin Buddhist Fellowship in the summer of 1994 (Nattier 1998, 191, n. 19). *Tricycle*'s fall 1994 issue featured the topic "Dharma, Diversity and Race," with contributions by Rick Fields, Victor Sogen Hori, and others. Hori, a third-generation Japanese-Canadian Buddhist, distinguished the "ethnic religion" of Asian Buddhists in North America from what he called the "missionary religion" taught by Asian Buddhist teachers to non-Asian converts. "While both groups claim to be Buddhist," Hori explained, "each approaches Buddhism from quite a different starting point" (1994, 50). Rick Fields commented ond the past, present, and future of America's two Buddhisms:

> Today the divergence between white American Buddhists and Asian-American Buddhists is as wide as or perhaps even wider than it was in the past. The Asian-American Buddhists are going one way, the white American Buddhists another. Looking at it this way, we see not one but two American Buddhisms.
>
> (1994, 56)

Although Fields here invoked the notion of "two Buddhisms," the distinction of coining the phrase falls to Charles Prebish, whose 1993 article "Two Buddhisms Reconsidered" adapted his original usage of the phrase (Prebish 1979, 51) to the current controversy. In an intervening article, Prebish (1988) had drawn a clear distinction between "two radically differing groups"—"Asian immigrants" and "Caucasian Americans"—but he did not yet apply the term "two Buddhisms" to this distinction. Prebish made this application explicitly in his later article, distinguishing the two Buddhisms practiced by "ethnic Asian-American Buddhist groups" and "mostly members of European derived ancestry" (1993, 189).

The controversy of the early 1990s made it difficult for anyone in scholarly or popular circles to avoid the two Buddhisms distinction. Among advocates and critics alike, the notion stimulated a creative new discourse about the Buddhist presence in Western societies. Many, if not most, observers now employ this dichotomy to identify the key category break in contemporary Buddhism, regardless of whether they invoke the actual phrase "two Buddhisms" (for example, Croucher 1989; Baumann 1994; Prebish 1998, 1999, 57–63, 2000, 2001; Tanaka 1998; McLellan 1999; Williams and Queen 1999; Chai 2001; Clasquin 2002; Matthews 2002; McMahan 2002; Simmer-Brown 2002; Spuler 2002). Various labels for the two wings have been offered: ethnic Buddhism and new Buddhism (Coleman 2001), heritage Buddhists and new Buddhists (Nattier 2001), cradle Buddhists and convert Buddhists (Tweed 2000, 2002), culture Buddhists and convert Buddhists (Numrich 2000). Carl Bielefeldt (2001), who uses the labels hereditary Buddhists and convert Buddhists, writes: "Whatever we call them, the distinction between the two types is striking." Popular discussions influenced by scholars have also adopted the typology (for example, *Religion Watch* 1994; van Biema 1997; "Tensions in American Buddhism" 2001; Farrelly 2002). Although advocates of the two Buddhisms typology may forgo extended critical reflection about it, they certainly have more awareness of its implications now than before the recent controversy.

Some scholars modify or refine the basic two Buddhisms typology, or adopt it with caveats. Peter Gregory (2001) assigns only provisional value to the two Buddhisms approach. Gregory, who finds the field of American Buddhist Studies hampered by a "still primitive level of sophistication" in such matters (2001, 246), predicts that "the meaningfulness of this distinction is likely to diminish with time as the boundaries separating the two 'communities' inevitably change and blur." For now, Gregory grants, the two Buddhisms typology offers "an initial foothold in sorting out a phenomenon that otherwise threatens to overwhelm us with its complexity" (2001, 242–3). Richard Seager agrees about the provisional utility of such an approach. Like Gregory, Seager (2002, 118) believes that distinctions within contemporary Buddhism in the United States will inevitably fade away, and that "an indigenous American form of the Dharma will emerge." Seager (1999, 2002) proposes a "three Buddhisms" typology, advocating a category break between longestablished ("old-line") and recently arrived ethnic-Asian Buddhist populations, with converts as the third category. However, despite its convenience, simplicity, and "a good deal of explanatory power" (Seager 2002, 116), even this typology has only limited value in Seager's mind: "It is my own view that the idea that there are three American Buddhisms can be shelved, only to be brought out from time to time to gauge how issues articulated in a founding era are progressing" (2002, 118). As Seager and others point out, Buddhism's founding era in some Asian societies lasted several centuries—thus it is still early in the West. Typologically, Seager's three Buddhisms challenges the two Buddhisms' easy conflation of the experiences of ethnic Asians who arrived in the United States in different historical eras. Peter Gregory argues for retaining the two Buddhisms category break while still recognizing the "major divide" that separates the historical cohorts within the ethnic-Asian category:

> Although the contemporary historical situation is entirely different from the pre-war period, the difference between the two Buddhisms still seems to hold in a general way. Asian American and immigrant Buddhists tend to be Buddhist for different reasons than American convert Buddhists, and Buddhism plays a different role in their lives.
>
> (2001, 243, 244)

This line of discourse reminds us that the label "immigrant" is appropriate for recent groups (Numrich 1996), but it is not comprehensive enough to account for the entire ethnic-Asian wing of the two Buddhisms typology since some Buddhist populations now extend beyond the third generation in the West.

Thomas Tweed's cumulative body of work argues for a basic two Buddhisms dichotomy of "cradle Buddhists who inherited the faith and converts who chose it" (2002, 20; cf. 1999; 2000, xi–xxii), yet he pushes the underlying assumptions of such an approach. Tweed distinguishes "adherents" and "sympathizers" of Buddhism. Defining a Buddhist adherent, whether cradle or convert, is no simple task, Tweed argues, since adherence can be measured by a variety of standards, and religious identities are always hybrid complexities. Granting the importance of focusing on Buddhist adherents, Tweed suggests that scholars pay equal attention to the ways in which sympathizers contribute to the Buddhist presence in the West.

Some scholars reject the basic two Buddhisms approach, on various grounds and to varying degrees. It has been dismissed altogether as too simplistically dichotomous to be of much use. “Distinctions such as convert versus immigrant Buddhism or American versus Asian Buddhism necessarily gloss over [the] diversity” of Buddhist America, writes Donald Swearer (2001). One of Swearer’s former students, Wendy Cadge (2001), argues that “the current picture is considerably more complex” than a two Buddhisms dichotomy can portray. A bifurcated typology also cannot easily accommodate cases where the two types blend or interact, such as mixed-religious marriages (Perreira 2002) or mixed ethnic institutions—unless, of course, these are seen as exceptions to the two Buddhisms rule. In at least two other examples of mixed-ethnic situations—inter-Buddhist associations and the “parallel congregations” found in many ethnic-Asian Buddhist temples—the two Buddhisms rule persists in intriguing ways. Most inter-Buddhist associations maintain and celebrate the ethnic diversity within their membership, which generally breaks out along two Buddhisms lines (cf. Numrich 1999). In the parallel congregations phenomenon, ethnic Asians and non-Asian converts practice their respective types of Buddhism under the same institutional roof and a shared clerical leadership (Numrich 1996, 2000).

Some lament that the two Buddhisms typology unnecessarily exacerbates the tensions sparked by the controversial *Tricycle* editorial, and thus should be abandoned for ethical reasons. As Peter Gregory puts it, the scholarly problem became a polarizing community problem for Buddhist America (2001, 246). However, as Kenneth Tanaka notes regarding this controversy, the two Buddhisms typology reflects a social reality that need not be contentious:

> While this division cannot be denied completely, perhaps, the reality is not as serious as reported. Certainly, no pervasive animosity is driving apart the two camps. The separation that we do witness is not due to any conscious effort to exclude the other but is more a natural tendency to gravitate to those with shared background and interests.
>
> (1998, 288)

Other scholars have proposed alternative typologies for the contemporary Buddhist presence in the United States and other Western societies. “One approach that has gained some currency in recent years speaks of ‘two Buddhisms’,” Jan Nattier (1998, 188–9) wrote, “the Buddhism of Asian Americans, on the one hand, and that of European Americans (sometimes labeled ‘White Buddhism’) on the other.” But Nattier found this “simple opposition…clearly inadequate to the task, primarily because it fails to account for the full spectrum of racial and ethnic diversity in Buddhist America,” such as ethnic Asians who meditate with white Buddhists or non-white Buddhist converts. “To make sense of the landscape of Buddhist America,” Nattier wrote elsewhere (1997, 74), “one must go beyond race and ethnicity to consider an entirely different factor: the ways in which these various forms of American Buddhism were transmitted to the United States.” She thus proposed a tripartite typology of modes of transmission: Import, Export, and “Baggage” Buddhism (Nattier 1995, 1997, 1998).

Among other contributions to the growing discourse about the two Buddhisms approach, Nattier’s critique provided an important corrective to the lingering stereotype

that convert Buddhism was a whites-only affair. She took seriously the adherents of Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai International Buddhism, who are largely non-white, who chant rather than meditate, and who, along with ethnic-Asian Buddhists, had been slighted by those sharing Helen Tworkov's vision of an emerging "American Buddhism." Still, Nattier's typology could be understood as a variation of the basic two Buddhisms dichotomy (Numrich 2000, 201, n. 6; Gregory 2001, 246), with indigenous, non-Asian Buddhists converted through either Import and Export modes of transmission on one side, and "Baggage" Buddhists, whom Nattier identifies as ethnic Asians "born into the faith of their ancestors" (1995, 47), on the other. Judging by her most recent contribution (Nattier 2001), it appears that Nattier has returned to a two Buddhisms position, referring to "two rather unusual groups" in contemporary American Buddhism: "recent converts to Buddhism" and "recent Asian immigrants," or "new Buddhists" and "heritage Buddhists." As she put it in an earlier work,

> there is usually precious little contact between "ethnic" Buddhist groups in America, made up of recent immigrants to this country, and "elite" groups composed of relatively privileged, non-immigrant American converts. From a sociological standpoint it is hardly surprising that these two types of groups should have little in common, and that they should draw on quite distinct aspects of the Buddhist tradition.
>
> (Nattier 1992, 531, n. 5)

David Machacek (2001) does not reject the two Buddhisms approach *per se*, but argues that it tells only half the story, the demand side of what ethnic Asians and converts want from their respective Buddhisms. Machacek combines this with Nattier's typology, which he considers the supply side of the story, to offer "a more compelling and useful way to think about Buddhism in America" (2001, 66). This results in four categories of Buddhism—Traditional, Ethnic, Convert, and Americanized—the first two emphasizing different aspects of the ethno-religious identities of immigrant Buddhists, and the third representing the other wing of the standard two Buddhisms model. According to Machacek, the fourth category, Americanized Buddhism, "represents the future of Buddhism in America…[since] Buddhist organizations will be increasingly made up of American-born Buddhists, both the children of converts and the children of immigrants" (2001, 70). Machacek uses the Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai International (NS/SGI) movement as a case study for his model, contrasting it to the Buddhist Churches of America.

The NS/SGI case raises important considerations for the two Buddhisms approach. First, NS/SGI ostensibly poses a typological anomaly. Richard Seager, for instance, writes that SGI, the lay branch of the movement following a schism in the early 1990s, "fits awkwardly in the convert camp" (2002, 113; cf. Gregory 2001, 246). James Coleman locates SGI "somewhere between the ethnic Buddhism of the Asian immigrants and [the] three streams of the new Buddhism" examined in his book (Zen, Vajrayāna, and Vipassanā), and decides to bracket SGI out of his analysis of convert Buddhism altogether (2001, 9, cf. Coleman 1999, 92). This hesitancy stems from NS/SGI's marked differences in perspectives, practices, and demographics when compared with the majority of Buddhist converts. Yet this ignores the obvious fact that most NS/SGI

Buddhists in America are "new" Buddhists, to use Coleman's term, who, like their convert counterparts in other groups, have experienced identity transformation by adopting a religious worldview different from that of their ethnic heritage and of the culture in which they were raised. Machacek classifies SGI as an immigrant group, yet his own scholarship indicates that it has provided only minimal ethno-religious functions for Japanese immigrants and that ethnic attachment is waning among American-born ethnic-Japanese members (Machacek and Mitchell 2000; Machacek 2001). My own sense is that NS/SGI's sectarian Buddhist identity eclipsed its ethno-religious functions early on, especially in the United States where the movement quickly shifted its emphasis to convert recruitment. Thus, it properly belongs in the convert category, where it resided in the early literature on new religious movements and religious conversion dynamics (for example, Snow and Phillips 1980; Snow *et al.* 1980).

NS/SGI is the only convert-Buddhist group to raise a second generation in the faith. This presents another typological consideration for the two Buddhisms approach. "[S]hould children and grandchildren of convert Buddhists, if raised as Buddhists, be qualified as convert Buddhists without conversion?" asks Martin Baumann (2002b, 54; cf. Seager 2002, 106). The conscious choice of identity transformation is fundamental to the conversion phenomenon (Travisano 1970; Heirich 1977; Lofland and Skonovd 1981). Non-Asian Buddhist converts in Western societies adopt a religious worldview different from that of their ethnic heritage and of the mainstream culture in which they were raised. An argument can be made that the term "convert" still applies to the children of the original cohort since this new generation must at some point consciously choose to perpetuate their parents' rejection of their former religious worldviews.

In the long term, however, a cultural heritage of Buddhist identity could be created for non-Asian converts if they became an ethno-religious subgroup within a larger population group, like the Amish or the Mormons within the white population of the United States, or African-American Muslims within the black population. In such a scenario, after several generations, Buddhism would serve the same cultural function for these groups as it does now for Asian-American Buddhists. Eventually, the term "convert" would not apply to the descendants of the original cohort, since they would no longer be part of the religious mainstream and would inherit an ethnic Buddhist heritage instead of perpetuating their ancestors' rejection of their original ethnic heritage. NS/SGI may be the only convert group with the necessary intergenerational stability for this scenario to emerge. It remains to be seen whether any of the more individualistic, meditation-oriented convert groups will survive the baby boomer generation, or instead fade away as did convert Buddhism in Victorian-era America (see Tweed 2000).

Of course, the whole notion of "conversion" has been challenged by both critics and advocates of the two Buddhisms typology. The term seems too strong for individuals who find Buddhism attractive but do not consider themselves exclusive or even serious adherents of the religion (Coleman 2001, 196; Gregory 2001, 242). For instance, many Jewish converts to Buddhism claim a dual identity, both Jewish and Buddhist (or "JUBU") (Kamenetz 1994; Boorstein 1997). As Lionel Obadia explains in discussing Jewish Buddhists in Israel,

> Their approach to Buddhism is mainly characterized by rejection of the institutionalized forms of Judaism, not by withdrawal from their

> Jewishness. The incorporation of [Buddhist] practices and beliefs is not considered as a threat to their [Jewish] identity since they gave up the praxis of orthodox Judaism for a new definition of Jewishness.
>
> (2002, 185)

Does this constitute "conversion"? I would argue that it does, since it entails identity transformation and the adoption of a new religious worldview differing from that associated with their ethnic Jewish heritage. The retention of aspects of Jewish cultural identity does not negate the significance of the new religious identity, any more than in the cases of white or black Buddhist converts who retain certain social and cultural identifiers that continue to differentiate them from ethnic-Asian Buddhists, especially racial identity. Even in situations where Jewish rituals are combined with Buddhist practices in a new religious syncretism (Obadia 2002, 180), Buddhism functions as the primary religious interpretative filter for the participants. The same holds for Catholic Buddhists and Protestant Buddhists.

Unlike David Machacek, who combines Jan Nattier's modes of transmission typology and the two Buddhisms typology, Martin Baumann rejects both. With regard to the two Buddhisms, Baumann (2001, 2–3) proposes that "[a]ttention needs to be drawn to the contrast between traditionalist and modernist Buddhism that is prevalent in both Asian and non-Asian settings," traditionalist Buddhism comprising popular or folk religious practices, modernist Buddhism comprising a more cognitive emphasis on meditation, scriptures, and rationalism. Although Baumann suggests that a traditionalist/modernist dichotomy suffuses both camps, his descriptions make traditionalist Buddhism characteristic of Asian Buddhists and modernist Buddhism characteristic of non-Asian Buddhists (2001, 25–8, 30)—again, the basic two Buddhisms dichotomy framed along broad ethnic lines. In his contributions to *Westward Dharma*, Baumann (2002b) reiterates his rejection of the two Buddhisms dichotomy in one chapter, yet employs it in his discussion of Buddhism in Europe in another (Baumann 2002a).

Although I am not aware of any critics of the two Buddhisms typology who have articulated this as an alternative, categorizing Buddhists by "denomination" has been common in the literature (Numrich 2000, 192; see earlier discussion). The three major branches of Buddhism are Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, each comprising numerous traditions and lineages, such as Pure Land and Zen within Mahāyāna. A case can be made that the two Buddhisms distinction often, if not usually overshadows shared denominational identity in Western contexts. Substantive differences in perspectives and practices can be found between the Vipassanā meditation movement and immigrant Theravāda Buddhism (Numrich 1996; Fronsdal 1998), between convert Vajrayāna groups and ethnic Tibetans (Lavine 1998), and between white Zen Buddhists and their ethnic-Japanese counterparts (Asai and Williams 1999). A classic example of this ethnic parallelism is found in suburban Chicago, where white and ethnic-Vietnamese groups of Thich Nhat Hanh followers engage in different styles of Buddhist practice, unaware even of each other's existence (Numrich 2000, 196).

Descriptive and analytical utility of a two Buddhisms typology framed in broad ethnic terms

A major advantage of the two Buddhisms typology is its recognition of real differences in the historical appropriation of Buddhist identity. In the largest sense, one wing taps into a generations-old Buddhism bound up with cultural identities, and the other wing is creating a new religious identity without cultural precedents in its adherents' own ethnic histories. This simple dichotomy should not be dismissed as simplistic. As Janet McLellan describes the distinction in her discussion of Buddhism in Canada: "The development of non-Asian Buddhism has had no historical links to western culture, government, power, or politics…. Among Asian Buddhists, the transmission of and belief in traditional doctrines and scriptures are expressed as part of their cultural heritage" (1999, 26–7). This difference in cultural "rootage" helps to explain why ethnic-Asian Buddhism is expressed in community and family contexts, whereas convert Buddhism is typically individualistic (Ellwood 1983, 17; Tanaka 1998; Coleman 2001, 197–8; Gregory 2001, 244–5).

A related advantage of a two Buddhisms approach is that it highlights important majority/minority ethnic dynamics. Prior to the controversy of the early 1990s, most observers under-appreciated the implications of the social fact of *two* Buddhisms in Western societies. Some still do not fully appreciate the importance of this dichotomy. In two pointed essays stemming from the controversy, "Confessions of a White Buddhist" (Fields 1994) and "Divided Dharma: White Buddhists, Ethnic Buddhists, and Racism" (Fields 1998), Rick Fields identified racism as a key factor in what he called "the dual development of American Buddhism" (1998, 196). As a "white Buddhist" himself, Fields understood the privileged status that he and others like him enjoyed in a racially stratified society, and he wished to shed "some light on the racism (unconscious though it may be) that makes up one many-braided strand of American society and so of American Buddhism." "What's more," Fields continued, "those whom I have described as 'white Buddhists' immediately recognize themselves in the description." Fields admitted the inadequacy of the term "white Buddhists" (1998, 196–8), but his point was well taken—ethnic identities and racial dynamics have mattered greatly in the history of Buddhism in the United States. Minority social status leads to a telling designation often employed by ethnic-Asian Buddhists when referring to non-Asian Buddhist converts. As I put it in my description of two US temples, "many if not most of the Asians in our temples are American citizens, and yet they commonly refer to the non-Asian members of the temples as 'Americans'." (Numrich 1996, 64).

Much has been written about the structural impediments to acceptance of Asian-Americans as "full Americans" in US society (Lowe 1996; Takaki 1998; Tuan 1998), and the field of Asian-American studies has recently underscored the crucial roles played by race, racism, and religion in minority group identity formation for Asian-Americans (for example, Min and Kim 2002). David Yoo (2000, 123) points out that the Nisei or US-born second generation that matured in the 1920s–1940s had to confront the hard reality that "Japanese Americans remained a marked population wherever they went." Race and religion intersected for Japanese-Americans, both Buddhists and Christians, and their

temples and churches became institutions of minority ethnic identity in a repressive society (2000, 55–6, 120–1). As R.Stephen Warner observes, given America's racially stratified social structure, "For the foreseeable future, they [Asian-Americans] will continue to need their churches [and temples] as a refuge against lack of racial acceptance by the host society…as well as a staging ground for attempts to overcome racism" (2001, 41).

The dialogue that occurs on such communal "staging grounds" taps into deep historical and cultural linkages between homeland Asian and diasporic ethnic-Asian identities. It is instructive to consider the terminology employed by Asian-Americans in discussing their religious identities: "reconfiguring," "return," "re-site-ing/reciting," "retrieval," "reexamination," "reformulation," "reconstructing," "reappropriation," and "revitalization" ("Critical Reflections on Asian American Religious Identity" 1996). The prefix "re-" in all of these terms has past, present, and future connotations, in that Asian-American groups draw from traditional heritages in adapting to new social contexts. As one of the participants in the discussion just cited summarized, "All of these essays share the assumption of loss and separation from a parent tradition." Moreover, all participate in the dilemma of "[h]ow to negotiate the shedding of culture without the loss of religious and, necessarily, ethnic identity" (1996, 187).

This challenge of ethnic identity formation devolves heavily on young immigrants and the generations of ethnic Asians born in racially stratified Western countries. The growing literature on the Korean-American experience explores the dynamics of ethnic identity formation in the second generation of that recent immigrant community. Despite significant second-generation disaffection from the Old World ways of their parents, a common theme in American immigration history generally (Hansen 1937, 1940), Korean-Americans tend to retain an ethnic-Korean, or at least bicultural, identity (Cha 2001; Goette 2001; cf. Min and Kim 1999). As Fenggang Yang (2002, 91) notes in his contribution to *Religions in Asian America*, the reality of American racism eventually catches up with American-born Chinese, sending them back to ethnic-Chinese or pan-Asian Christian churches. In the same volume, Russell Jeung (2002, 239) examines the relatively small number of pan-Asian churches, explaining that they "mobilize around racial boundaries." Jeung generalizes that "race continues to play a significant role in the lives of Asian Americans and their faith development" (2002, 240). Jung Ha Kim (2002, 205, 206) points out that although second-generation, pan-Asian churches may not be "ethnic" in the same ways as their parents' churches, they nevertheless become "re-ethnicized" with a racialized religious identity.

During recent field research in ethnic-Asian Buddhist temples for two projects in Chicago, we encountered a number of individuals who have reappropriated a Buddhist identity within the ethnic-Asian context of their communities. Some older immigrants claimed to practice a traditional religiosity more intensely than they did in their home country, a common report in the literature (for example, Williams 1988; Kurien 2002). Some young ethnic-Asian Buddhists expressed a strong reformist or modernist attitude, as in the case of one young adult leader in the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in the United States, an organization with four regional branches across the country. He told us that there is a difference between the Buddhist practices of many of his peers and those of their immigrant parents. Their parents merely "believe" in Buddhism, he claimed, whereas he and others of his generation have come to "know" Buddhism more

accurately. Their parents practice the traditions they were taught in Vietnam, which include a lot of "superstition" and elements not found in the teachings of the Buddha. The young people, on the contrary, have found the "correct practices" of Buddhism.

Martin Baumann's earlier suggestion, that a traditionalist/modernist dichotomy is more salient than a two Buddhisms dichotomy framed in ethnic terms, deserves further consideration in this context. In one place, Baumann predicts that "communities within traditionalist Buddhism in the West [that is, ethnic-Asian Buddhists] sooner or later will make moves toward a modernist Buddhism, a step held unavoidable to reach the youth and next generation" (2002b). As in the case of the young Vietnamese man just described, we already see evidence of a traditionalist/modernist debate in ethnic-Asian Buddhist communities, a carryover from developments in Asia during the past two centuries. Although modernist sentiments among ethnicAsian Buddhists share some similarities with the modernist Buddhism found in non-Asian convert circles, I would argue that the ethno-religious context of Asian Buddhism makes a categorical difference. When ethnic-Asian Buddhists move from a traditionalist to a modernist interpretation of Buddhism, or even when they simply debate the two interpretations among themselves, they do so in the context of their ethnic-Asian identity, an identity reinforced by racial boundaries in Western societies.

Many scholars of Buddhism in Asia have made distinctions analogous to Baumann's traditionalist/modernist categories. Comparative sociologists point out the differences between popular religion and elite religion in all class-divided societies, including Buddhist Asia (Sharot 2001). Anthropologists have long spoken of little and great traditions in Asian Buddhism, a notion that retains its utility despite falling out of favor in some circles (Scott 1994; Sharot 2001, 14). Scholars of Asian Buddhism have documented the reformist and revivalist Buddhist movements that arose in response to Western colonialist pressures, creating a kind of "Protestant Buddhism" critical of traditionalist Buddhism (Bond 1988; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988). The term "Buddhist modernism" stems largely from the work of Heinz Bechert, who provides this succinct description:

> [M]odern Buddhists rediscovered "original" Buddhism as a system of philosophical thought with the sole aim of showing a way to salvation from suffering and rebirth. Traditional cosmology, the belief in miracles, and other elements which were unacceptable to a modern thinker were now identified as inessential accretions or modifications of Buddhism accumulated during its long historical development…[M]odernists describe Buddhism as "the religion of reason"
>
> (Bechert 1984, 275–6; cf. Sharf 1995)

Ethnic-Asian Buddhist groups in the West participate in long-standing communal dialogues about the meaning and practice of Buddhism primarily within a context of ethno-religious group identity. I first encountered the dialogue about traditionalist/modernist interpretations of Buddhism among ethnic-Asian Buddhists around the issue of god worship while conducting fieldwork at Thai and Sri Lankan temples in the United States (Numrich 1996, 84–5).

Recently, my research teams encountered this internal dialogue in several visits to a temple in Chicago that serves Southeast Asians. During our initial visit, the abbot expressed concern about the Western scholarly view of Buddhism. He handed us a book entitled *Buddhism: A Layman's Guide to Life,* a compendium of ethical duties taken from the Pāli scriptures and meant to help individuals reach Nirvana "by the overcoming of evil which arise[s] through one's selfish desire, the cultivation of good through beneficial and helpful actions to one's fellow beings, and the purification of mind through insight into the true nature of things." The abbot apologized that his temple is "not a true representation of the Buddhist religion" and that its ritual services are more of a cultural experience than a religious one. On our next visit we made specific inquiries about traditionalist folk healing practices at his temple since we had heard from other sources that its resident monks regularly dispense herbal remedies. The abbot responded by distancing his temple from all such folk healing practices, which he finds inconsistent with what he called a "purified" Buddhism that emphasizes the philosophical and ethical aspects of Buddhism, especially the importance of meditation for mind/body health. When temple members request an astrological consultation, a common element in popular traditionalist Buddhism in Southeast Asia, he said he discusses the matter with them, but he stressed to us that astrological readings, fortune telling, and the like would be irrelevant to "purified" Buddhists.

Despite the abbot's preference for "purified Buddhism," an interview of a female temple member uncovered the full range of popular healing practices carried on in his temple. Members receive astrological readings, amulets, and magical rituals from the monks, even though, in her judgment, "the Buddha did not support such things." If members were more "mindful" and self-confident through meditative practices, she explained, they would not need popular supernatural aids. The sentiments expressed by this woman and the abbot typify the modernist Buddhist critique of traditionalist Buddhism, both in Asia and in ethnic-Asian Buddhist communities in the West. The small number of non-Asian converts who frequent this Chicago temple are unaware of this internal communal dialogue, receiving only the "purified," modernist Buddhism promoted by the abbot. Indeed, alternative healing practices among Buddhists in the United States generally appear to follow the category break of the two Buddhisms (Numrich forthcoming).

The interesting case of Asian-Indian Buddhists in South Africa clarifies the category break in the two Buddhisms typology. As Michel Clasquin (2002) explains, the Buddhists of South Africa can be divided broadly into ethnic-Asian Buddhist populations (Burmese, Chinese, and Indian) and Western Buddhists (overwhelmingly white). Although in one sense the Asian-Indian Buddhists could be seen as "converts" from low-caste Hinduism, Clasquin nevertheless places them in the ethnic-Asian Buddhist category because "one factor that caused them to adopt Buddhism as an alternative to Hinduism was that, unlike Christianity or Islam, Buddhism was at least of Indian origin" (2002). Clasquin concludes: "Calling their religion an 'ethnic Buddhism' is therefore not too far off the mark" (2002, 153). Their new Buddhist identity differs sociologically from Western convert Buddhism in South Africa. For ethnic Asians in the West, it is really not a matter of "conversion" to Buddhism, even if one's family or ethnic group was not Buddhist in Asia in recent times. It is rather a matter of reversion, or of revisioning their Buddhist heritage, even if that heritage has suffered hiatus for some time, or has to be created in

response to the social pressures involved in minority group identity formation (cf. Chandler 1998 on the Chinese in America).

Recommendations to the field of contemporary Buddhist Studies

A two Buddhisms typology framed in broad ethnic terms captures an indisputable category break in the experiences, perspectives, and practices of contemporary Buddhist groups in the United States and other Western societies. The explicit recognition, since the early 1990s, of the significance of two Buddhisms, rather than one, has begun to redress earlier scholarly and popular neglect of ethnic-Asian Buddhism in favor of the convert phenomenon. The present category break between the two Buddhisms will remain as long as ethnic-Asian Buddhist groups hold minority status within the racialized social structures of Western societies (cf. Emerson and Smith 2000). Rick Fields knew that his fellow white convert Buddhists would recognize his description of their shared identity and privileged social status. Ethnic-Asian Buddhists likewise recognize their shared identity and minority social status. And both groups recognize the social chasm between them. I recall the Asian-American Buddhist who thanked me for a talk I gave about ethnic-Asian Buddhism to a virtually all-white audience at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC: “You described so well the Buddhism I was raised in,” he said, with some emotion. For most of my audience that day, which included many Buddhist converts, the Asian-American Buddhist experience was as foreign as Asia itself.

Once scholars acknowledge the validity of the basic two Buddhisms distinction, they can turn their collective attention toward advancing the field of contemporary Buddhist Studies in creative ways. Some recommendations follow. Despite the attention it has received in the past decade, the potential of the two Buddhisms typology has not yet been exhausted. Although recent overviews of contemporary Buddhism in the West pay significant attention to ethnic-Asian Buddhists (Prebish and Tanaka 1998; Prebish 1999; Seager 1999; Williams and Queen 1999; Prebish and Baumann 2002), a vestigial preference to tell the convert story remains in scholarly and popular circles. To date we do not have a comprehensive study of ethnic-Asian Buddhism in North America, a gap I hope to begin to fill with a proposed volume of essays examining ethnic-Asian Buddhists in several North American cities. Large topics like the commonalities and differences between “old-line” and recent ethnic-Asian Buddhist cohorts, immigrant versus refugee variables, inter-generational dynamics, denominational and ecumenical issues, and the effects of racism and minority social status need investigation. More comparative studies of Christians and Buddhists within a single ethnic-Asian population can be mounted (for example, Chai 2001). More work is also needed on particular ethnic-Asian Buddhist populations and groupings (see Kashima 1977; van Esterick 1992; Numrich 1996), both at the congregational level (for example, Padgett 2002; Perreira 2002) and broader (for example, Cadge 2002). Insights from multiple fields, especially Asian Buddhist Studies, ethnic-Asian studies, American religious history, and recent immigrant religions, can help to place ethnic-Asian Buddhism in larger contexts than have heretofore typified contemporary Buddhist Studies. For instance, the influences of post-colonial dynamics in Asia (for example, Bond 1988; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988) and current transnational religious networks (for example, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002) on ethnic-

Asian Buddhist communities in the West should be examined. To take another example, much can be learned about immigrant Buddhism by comparing and contrasting it with other immigrant religions. Has there been a Buddhist "denominational" evolution comparable with that among mainstream religions in the United States (Herberg 1956; Niebuhr 1957)? What does a later generation's "return" to ethnic identity mean for ethnic-Asian Buddhists, and how does it compare/contrast to this classic notion from immigration history (Hansen 1937, 1940)?

Much work remains to be carried out on the convert wing of the two Buddhisms typology as well. The significant extant scholarship on the two subgroupings within convert Buddhism—meditation groups (for example, Preston 1988; Coleman 2001) and the NS/SGI movement (for example, Hammond and Machecek 1999; Machacek and Wilson 2000)—needs to be collated and advanced in comprehensive fashion. What commonalities can be found among adherents in all convert groups, and what social and religious variables predispose individuals to pursue one kind of practice over others? The reputed eclecticism of convert Buddhists needs empirical substantiation—there may be more loyalty to specific traditions and lineages than we have been led to believe by anecdotal reports and philosophical dispositions toward an inevitable, singular "American" or "Western" Buddhism. Generational distinctions deserve investigation, along at least two comparative lines: (1) parents and children in the NS/SGI movement, and (2) baby boomer and later generations of non-Asian converts in general (see Loundon 2001).

Of course, the relationship between the two Buddhisms offers a great deal of grist for the research mill. Building on the work of Thomas Tweed (2000), historical comparisons between different eras can be drawn, examining both perennial tensions and benign mutual influences between the two camps. Activity along and across the borderline between the two types of Buddhism can be fascinating, for instance in mixed-ethnic temples and groups, or dialogues among Buddhist leaders. Are there any examples of true "fusion" of the two Buddhisms; that is, a completely new type of Buddhism forged out of elements taken equally from each side? This would differ from the "assimilationist" ideal that sparked the two Buddhisms controversy in the early 1990s; namely, that all Buddhists should conform to "white Buddhism" (cf. Numrich 1999).

As Richard Seager has pointed out to me, typologies create their own anomalies, exceptions, and blind spots. All of these should be examined thoroughly with regard to the two Buddhisms typology. The fluidity of the categories should be honored, as Thomas Tweed's insights on "adherents" and "sympathizers" suggest. Previous critiques of the two Buddhisms typology should be revisited, regardless of whether they still represent viable alternative typologies, such as Jan Nattier's notion of transmission modes and Martin Baumann's distinction between traditionalist and modernist Buddhism. The denominational typology should be considered on its own merits, divorced from its implications *vis-à-vis* the two Buddhisms typology, since it clearly represents another set of category breaks in the Buddhist presence in Western societies. Category breaks of gender and clergy/lay statuses should also be pursued. With regard to gender, we need more research that includes both converts and ethnic Asians (for example, Simmer-Brown 2002; Tsomo 2002). As to the clergy/laity topic, conventional wisdom says that lay expressions of Buddhism will eventually predominate in the United States, yet monastics, ordained teachers, and various kinds of specialists and trained leaders abound.

What do these mean for the evolution of Buddhism here (Numrich 1998; Prebish 1999, 173–202)?

And we need creative new typologies. It is not helpful to criticize current typological efforts without offering viable alternatives. We gain little analytical return by merely acknowledging the existence of many discrete entities in a diverse universe without making meaningful statements about overarching themes and dynamics. As I have suggested elsewhere, a dichotomy analogous to the two Buddhisms exists within other religions in the United States, and presumably elsewhere in the West (Numrich 2000; Mann *et al*. 2001; cf. Tweed 1997). Insights from the two Buddhisms discourse can be applied to the "two Hinduisms," the "two Sikhisms," and the "two Islams" as well. One intriguing difference in the Muslim context in the United States is that most indigenous converts have not come from the dominant group in society (whites), but rather from a racial minority (blacks). How have the respective "dual developments" (to use Rick Fields' term) of Buddhism and Islam differed because of this difference in racial composition?

Note

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Part IV
INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

14
CELTS AND CONTESTS
Sport as peregrination and the athlete as white martyr

Brian Aitken

I would like to begin by relating three stories from the Ulster Cycle, one of four collections of ancient Irish myths. The Ulster Cycle recounts the legends of the northern county of Ireland, chief among which are those concerning Cuchulain, pronounced "koohooln." The first story relates how Conchobar (Connor), the King of Ulster, spent a large portion of his day watching boys play a variety of games. On one occasion, Conchobar went to the playing field and saw something that astonished him: thrice fifty boys at one end of the field and a single boy at the other end, and the single boy winning victory in taking the goal and in hurling from the thrice fifty youths (Maclean, 1998, 156).

The game that the boys were playing was "hurling," still the national sport of Ireland, played with a curved stick and a leather ball, the precursor of field and ice hockey. The single boy was Cuchulain, who excelled at several other games: wrestling, throwing the javelin or spear, a ball game resembling rugby and an early version of golf. Nothing seemed to deter the King from watching these games, such was the love of sports among the ancient Irish Celts. Although, on the surface the sagas of Cuchulain extol his superhuman athletic feats, what can't be masked is the fact that Conchobar and his fellow Celts loved "the contest," not just the results of the contest.

The ancient Celts were a war-like people and there is no doubt sportive contests were seen as a kind of rite of passage preparing boys to become warriors. But these ancient stories make it plain that they loved the play element in the contest, not the violence. This is explicit in the following passage where Cuchulain sets out against his mother's will to find Emain Macha (Seat of the Monarchs) so that he can become a member of King Conchobar's court:

> The boy went forth and took his playthings. He took his hurly stick of bronze and his silver ball; he took his little javelin for casting and his toy spear with its end sharpened by fire and he began to shorten the journey by playing with them. He would strike his ball with the stick and drive it a long way from him. Then with a second stroke he would throw his stick, so that he might drive it a distance no less than the first. He would throw his javelin and would cast his spear and would make a playful rush after them. Then he would catch his hurly stick and his ball and his javelin; and

> before the end of his spear had reached the ground, he would catch its tip aloft in the air.
>
> (Bellingham, 1990, 17)

Cuchulain and the ancient Irish Celts knew what Dutch scholar Johan Huizinga (1955) has told us about why any form of play is so magnetic: it is the element of fun, and without this element, play becomes too serious and ceases to be play.

The second story relates how Cuchulain got his name. Conchobar and fifty older champion warriors are invited by the blacksmith Culann to a feast. After they all arrive, Culann closes the gates to his compound and says that his dog will guard his cattle and fields. Meanwhile, Cuchulain is somewhat behind this group, making his way to the feast. As he enters Culann's courtyard, the dog attacks him. Cuchulain, in full view of the guests who are watching from inside, fights the dog with his bare hands and smashes him to pieces against a pillar. Culann is glad Cuchulain was not hurt but bemoans the loss of his trusty watchdog. Cuchulain, sensing that the blacksmith is distraught, says to him: "Fear not, I shall raise a puppy of similar pedigree for you and until it is large enough to guard your territory, I myself will be your watchdog" (Bellingham, 1998, 18). Conall, another of the Irish chieftains present, says, "then we shall call you Cuchulain 'the Hound of Culann' from now on" (Bellingham, 1998, 18).

Cuchulain became a superbly trained athlete/warrior, receiving his training on the Isle of Skye at a school run by a celebrated female Celtic warrior Scathach. But in this story we should not be deflected by the brutal way Cuchulain bests the blacksmith's watchdog who apparently "required three chains to hold him and three men on each chain" (Bellingham, 1998, 18). Rather, we should see this as a metaphorical contest between two powerful contestants. Cuchulain had to prove himself, especially in front of the elders of his kingdom. He totally succeeds and bests his adversary, but immediately after he resurrects a new adversary, who perhaps will be even more skilled because he will be trained by Cuchulain himself. What we are exposed to here, primitive though it might be, is a sense of sportsmanship on Cuchulain's part. You have to respect your opponent in the contest because if you totally destroy him/her, then there can be no contest. And Culann, who is part of the opposition, recognizes Cuchulain's sense of fair play and does not carry on a dispute with him but rather invites him into the feast. Once the contest is over the ferocity of both sides is replaced by civility and friendship. Outside the field of contest Culann demonstrates that one needs to forgive and forget the hostilities incurred during the battle.

Cuchulain is a tragic hero because in the end he is portrayed as being possessed by his own superhuman power. There are stories where he goes berserk in battle and takes on warriors even from his own side and wreaks great havoc among them. However, the greatest tragedy involved his son Conlaoch. Born out of an affair with Aoife (Eva), a Scottish princess who was his teacher Scathach's rival, Cuchulain left instructions that if Aoife bore a son, she should train him in all the arts of fighting and sport except the *gaelbog* or belly dart—a mysterious weapon that could be only cast at fords on water. Then she was to send Conlaoch to Erin, telling him to remain silent about who he was. Conlaoch, upon arrival in Erin, achieves amazing exploits in a short period; the Ulster warriors who are sent out to fight him are killed, so Cuchulain himself opposes him and is hard pressed by Conlaoch until he calls for his *gaelbog* and kills him. Only then does

Cuchulain discover that he has killed his own son. In the end, the story of Cuchulain is blatantly realistic about what happens when one lives by the sword. Eventually you destroy yourself, your inner spirit, much like Darth Vader did in the *Star Wars* trilogy; he became a victim rather than a benefactor of the Force when he abused its power. The Celts loved contests but they recognized that when the contest becomes absolute and all-consuming, it makes the contestants into demonic rather than heroic figures.

I have gone on at some length about the story of Cuchulain because these myths tell us many truths about the human spirit, and specifically about the intrinsic elements of sport or the contest. Today sport is by far a dominant game or contest. French sociologist Roger Caillois (1961) would argue that this tells us something about the highly competitive and latently violent nature of most Western societies. What concerns me is that sport today, or the contest, has largely become demoralized or separated from its intrinsic nature of play and the codes of ethics that have traditionally been associated with it.

One historical factor that has dramatically changed sport, or the contest, is *modernization*. This term refers to a process which started in the Renaissance/Reformation period when reason rather than religion became the major dynamic driving the development of human society in the West. Alan Guttman, in his seminal book *From Ritual to Record* (1978), has examined in some depth how modernization has affected sport. He lists seven factors:

1 *Secularization.* In ancient societies sports were attached to or incorporated into religious ceremonies or rituals such as the Olympic Games which were sacred festivals in honor of the god Zeus. Today there is little connection between religion and sport except occasional prayers led by clergy in the locker room.
2 *Equality.* In the recent past, sport was the privilege of the rich; now it has been democratized. Everyone should have the opportunity to compete, and the conditions of the contest should be the same for everyone.
3 *Specialization.* Today children are encouraged to play one or two sports, and within sports themselves there is more specialization right down to the high school level. In football, for example, every position is different; place kickers, punters or kick returners require very distinct skills and abilities.
4 *Nationalization.* Today there are rules that govern every aspect of sport whereas in ancient times the conventions were few and far between and were loosely interpreted by players and referees. As well, athletes train with the help of highly skilled coaches and according to scientific principles. Champion swimmers, for example, diet, shave their bodies, wear water-smoothing body suits, and calculate exactly how fast they should swim each length.
5 *Bureaucratization.* Modern societies are highly organized and administered by several levels of bureaucracy. In the past all sports were casually organized and administered by state authorities. Today sports like soccer or football are smothered by organizations, starting at the top with FIFA, the International Federation of Football. With over a billion players worldwide, every country has vast networks of soccer organizations governing professionals as well as five-year-olds.
6 *Quantification.* As Guttman writes, “modern sports are characterized by the almost inevitable tendency to transform every athletic feat into one that can be quantified and measured” (1978, 47). The ancient Greeks, for example, in spite of Summer Games in

every large city, did not keep records of the performances of athletes; they recorded only the names of the victors. Today all the minutiae of information in every sport are tabulated. In professional baseball, we know the batting average, times at bat, numbers of singles, doubles, triples, home runs, runs batted in, stolen bases, and strike-outs, and much more about every player.

7 *Records.* With all the recorded statistical information and the desire to achieve and win, which are root values in modern sport, breaking records is a preoccupation with high-level athletes and the managers of sports because "breaking records draw fans." According to Guttman, "without the gods present at modern games, setting records is a uniquely modern form of immortality" (1978, 55).

Guttman's analysis of the modernization of sport underlines how sport has been radically modified in the modem world. Many commentators would talk about progress in sport, but, collectively, all these processes have robbed sport of its spontaneity and "fun" element. Sport has become far too serious for all ages; the play element is underscored and sport is more like labor. Today we are far removed from the world of the ancient Celts and other ancient societies where contests were played often without victors or losers; the intensity of the competition was the desirable end.

The term "sport" comes from the Latin *desporto* meaning "to be carried away." Modern sport does not carry the player or spectator away; rather, it embodies in more intense forms the social realities of everyday life. Hugo Rahner, the Jesuit scholar, once wrote that when one enters the realm of play or sport, one "enters a world where different laws apply, to be relieved of all the weights that bear it down, to be free, kingly, unfettered, and divine" (1963, 65). Sport, because of modernization, no longer is a gateway to a "Field of Dreams" where we can enjoy sheer fun, catharsis, and transcendence.

Commodification is a second process which affects every area of life today, but it has been intrinsic to sport since World War II. In professional sports, no opportunity to make money is lost. There is still gate income, but television revenues from advertising generate most of the money. As well, there is signature clothing, playing cards, and endorsements paid to famous athletes for hawking everything from cars to beer. In Europe soccer players endorse products on their uniforms, and arenas and ball parks all over the globe are plastered with advertisements. Most teams today are corporations and many top-level athletes are businesses themselves. George Steinbrenner, the owner of the New York Yankees, sums up the current reality well: "Baseball is not just a sport anymore; we are a business. We are show business" (cited in Coakely, 1978, 201).

Commodification has transformed the contest of sport in many ways. Games take forever to play because there are regular breaks for televised commercials, which reduces the intensity of the play. Players are businessmen first and athletes second; strikes and holdouts are common as athletes try to negotiate through their agents the best deal. Loyalty to teams and cities are discarded since players are mostly mercenaries. Under free agency, players sign contracts with the top bidders; this usually means a rich market area like New York will have the best chance of getting the top players, thus reducing equality in the contest between teams from all cities. Team owners are also not immune to this rampant capitalism; many have no qualms about moving historical franchises from one city to another, as Arthur Model did with the National Football League's Cleveland Browns a decade and a half ago, because the new host city, Baltimore, offered a much

better opportunity for Model to make money. Greed and self-interest seem to be the issues that preoccupy athletes today, not a total dedication to excellence in the contest. Athletes no longer model heroic values like determination, loyalty, courage, endurance, and fairness, but rather personal opportunism and a savvy at negotiating the best contract. The total concentration on the contest and the sheer joy of playing and competing are no longer there as they were for Cuchulainn and the ancient Celts.

Vince Lombardi, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, is rumored to have said, “winning isn’t the most important thing; it’s the only thing.” Lombardi might not have made this statement, but it reflects the third reality in sport today, namely that *winning is everything* from the pros down to primary school kids. But it is this intense desire to win at all costs which is at the root of most of what ails sport today: violence, cheating, the use of illegal performance-enhancing drugs, and so on. Whether winning is the only thing is hotly debated. From the academic world, the strongest voice for winning as the only end of sport is that of James Keating, a former professor of physical education at a small mid-western American university. In the 1960s, Keating wrote several controversial articles wherein he made a fundamental distinction between sports and athletics, a distinction many physical educators still make. Keating has no problem supporting the idea that the primary intrinsic goals of sports are competing well and having fun. But athletics is something different; as he puts it, “the essence of the athletic endeavor lies in the pursuit of excellence through victory in the contest” (1965, 489). John Gibson suggests that Keating misses seeing that the root of sport and athletics lies in play. He writes,

> If athletics is nothing but a fight for a prize, then it is a spectacle and dehumanizing. As such, athletics would not be an arena in which excellence would have any meaning. If the heart of athletics is still play, there is more to it than winning.
>
> (Gibson, 2001, 59)

Keating’s distinction forces him to make athletics into a form of work and the athlete therefore becomes vulnerable to all the abuses that accompany trying to win the prize at all costs. By contrast, Gibson argues that what matters in sport is the level of performance. And by performance, he means not just excellence in technical skills but excellence in character. He uses Nietzsche’s “overman” as his prototype for what performance should mean. To quote Gibson again,

> The overman describes himself in his own terms and does not allow others to determine his being by their description of him…. He creates himself by the creation of his own values and creates his own reality in the process…. The overman is not the one who thinks himself superior in some petulant way, but one who drives himself hard, sets difficult goals for himself and demands more of himself than others.
>
> (2001, 67)

What Gibson is arguing is that it is the contest itself, all that goes on in the process of competing well, that is the end of sport, not the outcome or the winning. What the current

"critical" literature on sports tells us is the same directive the ancient Irish myths convey, that excellence of skills and moral character is what is important in the contest, not the outcome or victory. All the great heroes in Irish mythology like Cuchulain are eventually vanquished, but they remain heroes just the same.

The late Howard Cosell once wrote that there are many things wrong with sport, but there still is much that is good (cited in Coakley, 1978, 123). My consideration of the contest in Irish mythology at the outset of this chapter helps us to see that ancient Celtic peoples had some idea of the intrinsic good of the contest, of the excellence that contestants should aim for and the dangers implicit in trying to win too much or too absolutely. We need, however, to take our discussion to another plane of discourse to understand the implications of Cosell's statement. My contention is that sport has a spiritual dimension to it and that effort put forth by an excellent contestant is a spiritual quest.

There is a small but well-identified literary work that would claim that sport can be a religion in some sense. Michael Novak claims that sport relates to the realm of natural theology (1976), and Charles Prebish, for whom this *festschrift* is dedicated, argues that, "sport on occasion can bring its advocates to an experience of ultimate reality." He claims that in modern America "it is reasonable to consider sport the newest and fastest growing religion, far outdistancing what is in second place" (1984, 318). Today some scholars of religion make a distinction between religion and spirituality. The term "religion" refers to organized religion, and "spirituality" refers to people's experience of the sacred outside organized religion or to what Paul Tillich calls "ultimate concern" (1959). I find this distinction helpful, especially when discussing sport. Not all of sport is spiritual, and not all human experience is spiritual. Shopping, commuting, and most aspects of our jobs have little to do with spirituality. So how and when does sport embody the sacred or the spiritual dimension? This is the question I wish to answer. And in answering it, we will find further reason for valuing sport as sport and the quest of the athlete for excellence.

To facilitate this discussion, I want to return to my interest in things Celtic and especially to examine some key concepts in Celtic Christianity. Some scholars like James Mackey (1989) question whether there ever was a Celtic Christianity. There is, however, a significant literature on the topic, so one can contend that emanating in Ireland, then Scotland, Wales, and southeast England, there was a distinct brand of Christianity for at least 400 years, from the arrival of Patrick in Ireland in 432 CE to the "Romanizing" of the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh churches by the ninth century. Many Celtic Christian traditions did continue in isolated places like the Outer Hebrides Islands of Scotland, and these have been recorded and discussed in the *Carmina Gadelica* (1992) of Alexander Carmichael, in the work of poet Esther de Waal and church historian Ian Bradley. The distinct nature of Irish Celtic Christianity, however, has best been recorded by Thomas Cahill in his bestseller *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (1998). Cahill maintains that the monastery was the center of Christianity in Ireland and later in Scotland and Wales. In these monastic institutions, scribes and scholars preserved the treasures of the ancient world. Ireland was spared the barbarian invasions that decimated all traces of classical culture. So European civilization was saved by the Irish because later Irish monks like St. Columbanus went to the continent during the Dark Ages and reestablished classical learning in the monasteries they built in France, Germany, and Italy.

Two themes in Celtic Christianity define their unique spirituality: the related concepts of peregrination and the white martyrdom. The Latin term *peregrinatio* is found nowhere else in Christianity. According to Esther de Waal (1997, 2), the term is almost untranslatable, but its essence is caught in the ninth-century story of three Irishmen drifting over the sea from Ireland for seven days, in coracles without oars, coming ashore in Cornwall, and then being brought to the court of King Alfred. When he asked them where they had come from and where they were going, they answered that they stole away because they wanted for the love of God to be on a pilgrimage, they cared not where.

A peregrination is more than a pilgrimage which has a distinct destination; it is a journey without beginning or end—the process is what counts. Peregrinations were undertaken by thousands of Irish Celtic monks, on land, on sea, in caves, on desert islands; this outer journey, though, was really a mask for the inner journey, which was undertaken *pro amore Christi*, for the love of Christ. The greatest *peregrinus* was St. Brendan, who was born in 486. He became the abbot at a large monastery at Clonfert in central Ireland. But there was a restlessness about him, triggered largely by a holy man called Barinthus, who told Brendan of an Island of Paradise out in the far reaches of the Atlantic Ocean. Brendan chose fourteen monks; they built a large coracle, equipped it, and sailed out into the Atlantic, allowing the wind to blow them in whatever direction it might. The “Voyages of St. Brendan” was an immensely popular book in the Middle Ages and no doubt it was greatly embellished, but behind all its tales is the adventure of brave mariners discovering island communities of elderly monks, encountering icebergs and whales, and always contending with the vast tracts of ocean. Legend is that they might have discovered America, eight centuries before Christopher Columbus and three centuries before the Vikings set foot on Newfoundland. Eventually Brendan and his followers found the Island of Paradise. When they disembarked, the voice of an elder from the Island told them:

> Search and see the borders and regions of Paradise where you will find health without sickness, pleasure without contention, union without quarrel, feasting without diminution, meadows filled with the sweet scent of flowers and the attendance of angels all around. Happy is he whom Brendan shall summon here to join him, to inhabit forever and ever the island on which we are now.
>
> (in Sellner, 1993, 63)

Brendan and his men returned reluctantly to Ireland because they were told they would spoil the Island of Paradise if they remained.

All these stories about peregrination teach us that the spiritual life is an ongoing journey, that it is the spiritual quest that really matters in life, and that if spiritual seekers persist in their inner journey they will find a kind of paradise which Joseph Campbell, in *The Power of Myth*, following the lead of St. Ireneus, calls the experience of being fully alive (1988, 1). As in Campbell’s idea of the hero’s adventure, the *peregrini* cannot stay in paradise forever; they have to return to everyday life to tell others of their experience, even though now they will always be aliens in their own land and time.

What are the lessons for sport here? The spirituality of sport lies in the intensity of the contest. When the contestants are well matched and the level of play is excellent, then the contestants lose track of time and space. Nothing else matters; not contracts, not fans, not endorsements; the game is what counts. W.P.Kinsella, one of Canada's greatest storytellers, has a tale called *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy* (1987). It involves a baseball game between a tribe of Indians in Iowa and the 1919 Chicago White Sox, aptly renamed the Black Sox because they threw the 1919 World Series to the Cincinnati Red Legs, and eight of them, including Shoeless Joe Jackson, the best player in baseball at the time, were banned forever by the Commissioner, Judge Kenislaw Landis. In this story, the game goes on forever, into tens of thousands of innings with the score always tied and no one cares because the play is so intense, so even and so magical. Furthermore, what one finds in sport when the contest is engrossing, is that players and fans have a sense of being fully alive. As Eric Liddell, the evangelical Christian who would not run on Sunday and lost the chance to win a Gold Medal in his best event, the hundred meters at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, said, "When I run I feel God's pleasure" (*Chariots of Fire*, 1982).

In 563 arguably the greatest figure in Celtic Christianity, St. Columcille, better known by his Latin name St. Columba, landed with twelve followers in a small cove on the island of Hy, soon to be known as Iona. This six-square-mile piece of rock sits in the north Atlantic as part of the Inner Hebrides Islands just off the northwest coast of Scotland.

Then, as today, it is not an easy place to get to, so it was perfect for the monastic community Columba planned to build there. Columba was forty-two; he was well connected as both his parents were related to Irish kings; he was wealthy and a brilliant scholar and writer who had founded numerous monasteries, most notably at Derry and Durrow. But he had been at the center of a major conflict with Finnian of Clonard, the most influential abbot in the north part of Ireland. The result of his indiscretion (he copied a manuscript without permission for his own use) was that Columba was either sent into exile or chose to exile himself from his beloved Erin to a place where he could no longer see its shores. As he sailed northeastwards, searching for a new home, Columba penned this poem:

> How rapid the speed of my coracle
> and its stern turned toward Derry.
> I grieve at the errand over the proud seas,
> travelling to Alba of the ravens
> There is a grey eye that looks back upon Erin
> It shall not see during the life,
> the men of Erin nor their wives
> My vision over the brine I stretch
> from the ample oaken planks
> Large is the tear from the soft grey eye
> when I look back upon Erin.

(Maclean, 1998, 46)

Columba was a white martyr, perhaps the quintessential white martyr in the Celtic Christian tradition. The red martyrdom is more familiar; thousands of early Christians were persecuted and slain in gory fashion by the Romans. In Ireland there were two different types of martyrs. The green martyr was someone who retreated to a wilderness spot and lived a solitary life of prayer. St. Kevin, the founder of Glendalough, one of the great Irish Celtic monasteries, lived in a cave for three years, and St. Cuthbert, the most famous abbot of Lindisfarne, a monastery located on the northeast coast of England, periodically would go to one of the outer Fame Islands to pray, his only companions being a flock of sea birds. The white martyrdom seems to be original to the early Irish Celtic Christians; it entailed great sacrifice; one chose to leave home and all that one was familiar with and attached to so as to go on a peregrination in some distant place. St. Columba left his beloved Derry behind but, like all white martyrs, found his choice a liberation enabling him to pursue vigorously a spiritual calling without being deflected by the attachments of home. Thomas Cahill calls him a “warrior monk” cut from the same lines as Cuchulain, the greatest hero of Irish mythology. By his death in 597, “sixty monastic communities had been founded in his name along the jagged inlets and mountainous heights of windswept Scotland” (Cahill, 1995, 185). Columba was also a patron of scholars, artists, and bards. His monasteries became great schools of learning as well as missionary centers; illustrated biblical manuscripts like the *Book of Kells* were exquisitely crafted by anonymous artists at places like Iona and at least on one occasion Columba did return to Ireland where he persuaded the Irish kings not to suppress the order of bards because Ireland would not be the same without them. He was a compelling, athletic man, a born leader, who had the innate power to control other men by the force of his own personality. But there was another side to him and to the white martyrdom which showed another kind of excellence.

Adomnan, St. Columba’s biographer and the tenth abbot of Iona, makes it abundantly clear that Columba was a holy man. From the time of his youth, Columba had to battle with the dark forces in his soul. He was born into privilege, but he had to learn humility and to be a servant; he was a man of enormous power and influence, but learned to give his soul totally to God. Columba’s white martyrdom gave him a vision which involved especially the Celtic love of nature. “He lives in easy communion with nature speaking to forest animals and nicely managing our first recorded encounter with the Loch Ness Monster” (Cahill, 1995, 185). It was Columba’s vision that made him a living saint and as Cahill suggests, “if we are to be saved it will not be by Romans but by saints” (1995, 218).

The parallel between the white martyrdom of Columba and the quest of the athlete is self-evident. The athlete is a white martyr, at least potentially. The athlete has to cut himself/herself from the everyday world, to train and to dedicate his/her body, mind, and will to a process of attaining higher and higher levels of performance and athletic excellence. However, because of the process of commodification, which is omnipresent, athletes perceive their training and dedication solely as a means to fame and wealth. The reality today is that top-level athletes are primarily entertainers. Television makes athletes into icons as familiar to us as our own family members, and because of the hype that

surrounds them, they model only the current morality of self-interest and narcissism. As Novak points out, when commodification dominates athletics, the mythic quality of the game is lost (1976, 322). When athletes have their focus deflected from the quest for excellence of performance, they lose the opportunity to be white martyrs or saints, who draw the attention of their fans to a higher plane of reality.

The connection between the dedication or white martyrdom of the athlete and a higher realm of existence is well documented by the current literature on sport. Paul Weiss writes, “When we attend to any truth, we remove ourselves from the transient world, becoming one with eternity. The athlete, in his commitment, vivifies this fact” (1969, 248).

Howard Slusher makes the same connection between the commitment of the athlete and transcendence:

> Athletes in general (or at least those who are judged good beyond their mechanization) at some point in time, come to realize that there is something beyond all that is mortal, all that is comprehensible by the human mind. Within the movements of the athlete a wonderful mystery of life is present, a mystical experience that is too close to the religious to call it anything else.
>
> (cited in Prebish, 1993, 178)

And, finally, Michael Novak says,

> Among the god ward signs in contemporary life, sports may be the single most powerful manifestation. I don’t mean that participation in sports, as athlete or fan, makes one a believer in God, under whatever concept, image, experience or drive one attaches the name. Rather sports drive one in some dark and generic sense “godward.”
>
> (cited in Prebish, 1993, 152–153)

The ancient Celtic heroes like Cuchulain and King Conchobar loved their contests, for in them they found a kind of suspension of time, a breath of eternity. The Celtic Christian monks like Columba and Columbanus undertook their peregrinations as white martyrs *pro amore Christi*, for the love of Christ. The modern athlete, to move “godward,” must be driven by love, by love of the game and love of his/her isolated quest. But what the ancient Irish heroes and Celtic monks discovered is that their quest can only be completed by a greater love. As Reinhold Niebuhr once said, “Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we must be saved by love” (cited in Cahill, 1995).

Today sport can only be saved by love; sport can only become sport and the athlete an embodiment of excellence when athlete and fan alike discover that divine love is intrinsic and essential to every contest, game, or match.

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15 THE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT'S DOUBLE LEGACY

George D.Bond

Sallie King notes that engaged Buddhism has a "double legacy": it is traditional in drawing on the ethical traditions of Buddhism, and it is modernist in engaging the "social/political/economic issues which it confronts in particular locales."[1] The SarvodayaShramadana Movement in Sri Lanka shares this "double legacy" but also has a somewhat more complex identity. Sarvodaya clearly began during the Buddhist resurgence surrounding the emergence of an independent Ceylon and so it shares many ideas and perspectives with the forms of Sinhala Buddhism and Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism that also emerged during that period. These movements have appealed for inspiration and authority not only to the Buddhist scriptures but also to the Buddhist chronicles of Sri Lanka, such as the *Mahāvaṃsa*. Sarvodaya, however, as a Buddhist and Gandhian movement also clearly attempts to engage the kinds of social, political, and ethical issues that Sallie King mentions. One question that confronts anyone who encounters or reads about the Sarvodaya Movement is: To what extent can these two aspects of Sarvodaya's legacy or identity be separated? To what extent does Sarvodaya express or embody the Sinhala Buddhist perspective and to what extent does it break free from this perspective as a truly engaged Buddhist movement? The critics of Sarvodaya have tended to regard it as simply another version or expression of the Sinhala Buddhist position, while Sarvodaya's supporters have tended to view Sarvodaya as a totally separate, engaged Buddhist movement that is uninfluenced by Sinhala Buddhist views and biases. This chapter will argue that we must regard Sarvodaya from both of these perspectives in order to understand the movement. On the one hand, it must be seen as one manifestation of the kind of reconstructed Sinhala Buddhism that arose in Ceylon both before and after independence from Great Britain in 1948. But on the other hand, Sarvodaya must also be seen as going significantly beyond this Sinhala Buddhist perspective to express a more radical and revolutionary Gandhian-Buddhist response to the social, political, and economic problems facing the nation and the world.

There are probably many ways to examine this double legacy and identity of Sarvodaya, but in this chapter I want to approach this question by considering some of the examples that Steven Kemper discusses in his recent book, *Buying and Believing: Sri Lankan Advertising and Consumers in a Transnational World*.[2] In this book, Kemper focuses on the advertising business in Sri Lanka and in the process he provides a useful and somewhat distinctive picture of the general Sinhala Buddhist ethos of Sri Lanka. By referring to aspects of this Sinhala perspective provided by Kemper, we can analyze the Sarvodaya Movement in the context of the issues and the views that he points out as characterizing this ethos.

Kemper begins his discussion of the Sinhala Buddhist ethos by noting that "people in the advertising business approach Sri Lankan consumers as motivated by the claims of tradition, propriety, and economy."[3] As he shows, the terms "traditional and conservative" carry somewhat unique meanings in the Sri Lankan advertising world and do not always mean what we might assume. But the picture that emerges is one of Sri Lankan Buddhists who have what Kemper describes as "shared expectations about how to behave."[4] They have a certain self-restraint and propriety and are not too much swayed by consumerism. He says that "self-restraint means consumption restraint because consumption has at best a checkered status in SL (not to say South Asia in general)."[5] Kemper notes that the value of self-restraint is related to the South Asian "tradition of asceticism and self-abnegation that has influenced over two millennia of South Asian history." But he also explains that "advertising does not trade on these regularities." Instead, "advertising draws on the Protestant parts of the tradition—those parts marked by propriety and middle class restraint."[6]

The best example of this stance was, of course, Anagarika Dharmapala, who was the chief spokesman for the Buddhist protest against colonialism and also the chief architect of the Sinhala Buddhist perspective that has been described as "Protestant Buddhism." One important element of his message was a vehement rejection of the kind of consumerism that colonialism was forcing on Sri Lankans. He wrote:

> We are blindly following the white man who has come here to demoralize us for his own gain. He asks us to buy his whisky and we allow him to bamboozle us…. We purchase Pears soap, and eat coconut biscuits manufactured by Huntly and Palmer, and…drink the putrified liquid known as tinned milk, manufactured somewhere near the South Pole.[7]

Kemper writes that Dharmapala "protestantized" the Buddhism of his day and also "embourgeosied" it.[8] He was clearly an innovative reformer, who has been described as reinventing tradition by formulating "a code for an emerging Sinhala elite."[9] But, to understand Dharmapala and the rise of this "Protestant Buddhism" we should mark what Marty and Appleby have said about contemporary religious fundamentalist reformers: they are "selectively traditional and selectively modern."[10] Dharmapala's invention of tradition represented a selective response to a particular colonial juncture. It was not pure Buddhism, for that is a fiction, but it was shaped by his response to what we might call the "process that is Buddhism" in that juncture. I would compare this process to that of nationalism which Steve Kemper has described in an earlier book, *The Presence of the Past*. In that book he wrote that "modern nations draw on the past in a way that is not altogether arbitrary. … Nationalist visions of the past are frequently unreliable as historiography, but they do not begin from scratch."[11] Or as Kemper describes Marshall Sahlins' work regarding culture, "To the argument that invented traditions are somehow different from authentic culture, Sahlins argues that traditions—not just the notorious cases—always derive from political and economic circumstances. But they do not arise willy-nilly."[12]

So, if we ask whether contemporary Sri Lankan responses to consumerism represent Buddhist influences that derive from Dharmapala, we can say that in part they do. But they also represent responses that reflect the South Asian "tradition of asceticism and self

abnegation" that Kemper mentions. Contemporary Buddhists may be "inventing tradition" to respond to new junctures, but they too are not doing so willy-nilly. The underlying Buddhist values, such as desirelessness and non-attachment, form a part of an evolving process or tradition that we can call Buddhism that is taken up in new ways at new junctures. This represents one aspect of what Kemper refers to as the dynamic of change and continuity that is at work here and shapes the Sinhala Buddhist ethos.[13] In this way the Sinhala Buddhists have also been, to use King's terms, traditionalists and modernists.[14] They have sought to respond to the modern by interpreting their Buddhist heritage. And in this way also we see that the task and the views of the engaged Buddhists is somewhat similar to that of the Sinhala Buddhists in general. But the differences between the Sinhala Buddhist's perspective and that of the engaged Buddhists of the Sarvodaya Movement can be seen more clearly in three examples that we will consider in the rest of this chapter. These examples show that while Sarvodaya definitely has been shaped by many of the same influences—such as Dharmapala, for example—and responds to many of the same themes or issues as what we might regard as mainstream Sinhala Buddhism, Sarvodaya has built on these influences and themes in distinctive ways to articulate what it regards as more appropriate and revolutionary Buddhist responses to the economic and political issues and problems of post-colonial Sri Lanka.

As the first example, one of the most important themes of the resurgent Sinhala Buddhism around the time of independence was the emphasis on the village as the focal point for Sri Lankan society. This theme was taken up in various ways by the reformers and politicians such as S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike who sought to appeal to the rural Sinhala Buddhists. He declared that they represented the heart of the Sinhala Buddhist culture and the guardians of its values—and they also, not coincidentally, constituted a vast electorate. Kemper notes that whereas the colonial government had emphasized Colombo, the independent government in Sri Lanka—as in many newly independent states—emphasized the village:

> what marks the production of locality in postcolonial states is the way the nation state takes the village…as the center of gravity of the state and the neighborhood by which all other neighborhoods are defined…. As the state looks out on its constituents these days, the village has become the neighborhood that counts.[15]

Kemper goes on to show how this understanding of locality also has had great force in advertising.

Sarvodaya's focus on the village as the locale of its development programs can be seen to represent another expression of this theme. Having begun in the era of Bandaranaike's populism and socialism, the Sarvodaya Movement was shaped by the emphasis at that time on the village and the people at the grassroots. This whole post-colonial emphasis on the village, however, can be said to go back to or to continue an earlier nineteenth-century debate about the role of the village in South Asia. In one of the most influential images, a British official, Sir Charles Metcalfe, described Indian villages in a government report in 1832 as "little republics" that were "almost independent of any foreign relations…[and] seem[ed] to last where nothing else lasts."[16] The opposite view

of these village republics was presented by Karl Marx who commented in 1853 that, “We must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism.”[17] Marx regarded the Indian villages as places that enshrined social inequality and had had an oppressive effect on the people and the nation. Gandhi clearly followed the romantic depiction of Metcalfe and the idealization of rural life by Ruskin rather than the negative views of Marx. Gandhi expressed his view of the village in statements such as this: “It is in the villages of India where India lives, not in the few Westernized cities which are the citadels of foreign power.”[18] On Gandhi’s interpretation, the network of semi-autonomous villages represented the solution to the nation’s political and economic ills. Gandhi proposed the Village Panchayat as the ideal system of decentralized government.

Influenced by both the Sinhala Buddhists such as Bandaranaike and by Gandhi, Sarvodaya has taken this focus on the village and made it the basis not only for its development programs but also for its campaign for a new social order. This is the kind of revolutionary break with the Sinhala Buddhist nationalists that sets Sarvodaya apart from the Sinhala Buddhist ethos. Whereas the Sinhala Buddhist nationalists have proclaimed the virtues of the village and exploited the rural areas for votes, they have not placed the rural strategy at the center of their policy planning or values because they have been primarily committed to an urban and global development strategy. Sarvodaya, however, has sought to bring about a grassroots revolution that would liberate the villages from the top-down governmental and World Bank forms of development. Sarvodaya shares Gandhi’s belief that the village represents the spiritual and moral center of society. Since Gandhian logic holds that a true civilization, characterized by values such as peace, non-violence, and liberation, can never be created from the top down but must emerge from the bottom up, for Sarvodaya as for Gandhi, a village-based society and polity is essential for both peace and progress. Sarvodaya has begun a campaign to realize Gandhi’s goal of Gram Swaraj, village self-rule, which it takes to mean the ability of a village to be self-reliant and to be able to “democratically control and manage its own affairs.”[19]

A second way that Sarvodaya can be seen to share the Sinhala Buddhist ethos is that it expresses the kind of Sri Lankan attitude toward consuming that Kemper has pointed out: a conservative emphasis on values such as propriety and restraint and a devaluing of materialism. Kemper shows how advertising speaks to a public that views consuming in terms of these values.[20] The recent governments in Sri Lanka have tried to balance a rhetoric that supports these values with economic policies that encouraged open markets and the ready availability of more material goods. The Sinhala Buddhist people have also felt the pull of both of these forces, the traditional non-materialism and the contemporary lure of global consumerism.

On this point, however, Sarvodaya has been most clear: it has opposed materialism and consumerism and has made opposition to these values the central focus of its engaged Buddhist quest for a new social order. A.T.Ariyaratne, the founder of the Sarvodaya Movement, has emphasized Sarvodaya’s vision of an alternative, simple and sustainable lifestyle based on reducing material desires. He has especially criticized the government’s open economic policies for fostering consumerism and widening the gap between the rich and the poor.[21] Ariyaratne has noted that because of these policies the gap between the rich and the poor has grown so that “the poorest 40 per cent who

received 13 per cent of the national income in 1973 received only 7 per cent by 1985, whereas [the share] of the richest 10 per cent increased from 27 per cent to 50 per cent."[22] Ariyaratne has expressed Sarvodaya's opposition to these trends, saying that "The economic goals, structures and processes that are officially promoted are not…conducive to building peace in a Buddhist way. Promoting consumerism is one extreme which Lord Buddha rejected as, 'Attachment to worldly enjoyment' *(kāma-sukhallikānuyoga).*"[23] In a report to its members, Sarvodaya identified three main problems that it seeks to address: the "continued impoverishment of the bottom 60 per cent of the population," the ethnic conflict, and "the unreachable lifestyle being advertised as the one for the general population to aspire to."[24]

Sarvodaya has developed this kind of engaged Buddhist philosophy and formulated a Buddhist economic development model and a reformed social order that contrasts sharply with the kind of social order produced by Westernization and globalization. Goulet noted that Sarvodaya's image of awakening and development "strikes a death-blow to that 'dynamism of desire' which is the motor-force of Western aspirations after development, capitalistic and socialistic alike."[25] Sarvodaya's ideal of an integrated, people-centered form of development critiques the materialistic, capitalistic model of development dominant in Sri Lanka since the colonial period. Although the Sri Lankan government has focused on top—down, macro-development projects such as major irrigation systems and power-generating dams, Sarvodaya has endeavored to transform the grassroots conditions in the villages. Sarvodaya became more critical of the government's economic policies because, although they were designed to alleviate poverty by bringing industrialization and modernization, they actually made the situation worse. From Sarvodaya's perspective, the macro-development projects of the government and the international agencies such as the World Bank failed to reach the poorest of the poor. Ariyaratne expects that promoting value-based development in the villages will spark a "horizontal global awakening" whereby self-governing communities around the country will set in motion a grassroots social and economic revolution.[26]

In 1988, Ariyaratne published a book, *The Power Pyramid and the Dharmic Cycle,* in which he articulated this call for a spiritual revolution that would replace the present socio-economic and political structures with a Sarvodaya social order.[27] The title of this book reflects Gandhi's essay on "The Pyramid and the Oceanic Circle," in which he argued that society should not be like a pyramid with the many at the base supporting the few at the top, but should be an "oceanic circle" of individuals and villages.[28] In his treatise, Ariyaratne applied Gandhi's model to the conditions in Sri Lanka, arguing against what he described as the "Power Pyramid" of the current political and economic system in which a minority of the people had been able to usurp the power and the wealth of the masses. Very outspoken in his criticism of the situation in the country, Ariyaratne commented that, "One does not require explanatory treatises to realise that the prevailing social system is a violent oppressive system."[29] He argued that to correct the situation a total non-violent revolution was needed to overcome the structural violence created by the current system.

As a third example comparing Sarvodaya with the mainstream Sinhala Buddhist ethos, I want to consider the case study of the banking industry that Steve Kemper provides. Kemper discusses Sri Lanka's banking industry as "a critical link between global forces and ordinary people." He focuses on the founding of the Sampath Bank in Sri Lanka

because it was a private bank that followed an interesting course and broke the banking paradigm that had been established by the state banks since colonial times. This very successful bank drew on the Sinhala Buddhist tradition and sought to address the contemporary context, a process that Kemper describes as balancing the “local idiom” and “global modernity.”[30]

Sampath Bank grew by opening a large number of branch banks both in the Colombo area and in the rural towns out from Colombo at a time when the banking industry was fairly static otherwise. Kemper writes, “Something more than banking money and lending it out was going on here—the transition between banking as a state function and private enterprise, between colonial tradition and ‘modernity’.”[31] Sampath Bank adopted a strategy of becoming a bank for the people by promising them “Independence from foreign banks.” But it was not simply a bank for all of the people; it sought to be a bank for the Sinhala Buddhist people. Kemper shows that the bank had its origins in a suggestion that some members of the World Federation of Buddhists made to the bank’s founder, N.U.Jayawardene, about the need for an International Buddhist Bank.[32] Although this suggestion did not exactly materialize, Jayawardene founded Sampath Bank as a people’s bank having clear ties to the Sinhala Buddhist people. As Kemper notes, this bank “became the only Sri Lankan bank—and one of the very few businesses of any kind—to employ its Sinhala name, written in Sinhala characters, on signboards, advertising and printed material.”[33] The advertising for Sampath Bank depicted it as having a Buddhist character by using quotations from the Buddha about saving and investing. The advertisements noted that the Buddha advised, “Set aside one-fourth of your income for sustenance, two-fourths for investments. Save the remaining one-fourth for a rainy day.”[34] To appeal to the Sinhala community, Sampath Bank described itself in its advertising as “A truly Sri Lankan Bank for sons of the soil” and it allowed the people to become shareholders in an unprecedented way for a Sri Lankan bank.[35] The case of Sampath Bank represents a significant attempt to apply Sinhala Buddhist values to modern problems. In this example, leaders from the Sinhala Buddhist majority sought to use Buddhist values to provide an alternative to Western banks and to reshape the banking system of the country to benefit the Sinhala people.

The Sarvodaya Movement’s program of village banks and micro-credit societies has followed a somewhat similar approach by trying to establish a banking system for the people, but when we compare the Sarvodaya program with the Sampath Bank, we see how Sarvodaya breaks with the Sinhala Buddhist ethos and takes banking to a more revolutionary extreme. Ariyaratne views banking as the key to the non-violent revolution that Sarvodaya seeks.

Sarvodaya’s entry into village banking and micro-credit expressed some of the same tropes as the Sampath Bank, but, for example, where Sampath sought to provide an alternative to government banks, Sarvodaya sought to provide an alternative to commercial banks altogether. Where the people would be partial shareholders in Sampath Bank, they would become the owners and managers in Sarvodaya’s village banks. Sarvodaya’s village banks are administered and governed by committees of the people.

Sampath Bank stressed “that it was not only a local bank but a grassroots one.”[36] As Kemper shows, however, this was largely an advertising campaign for Sampath Bank, which really did most of its business in Colombo despite having many branches in rural and suburban towns. But Sarvodaya’s banking and credit system is based on the premise

of making grassroots banking a reality. In 2002 Sarvodaya had savings societies in over 3000 villages and full village banks in 670 villages. These banks were usually located in houses in the villages and they were managed by local people.

Sarvodaya has attempted to eliminate the barriers that have typically discouraged poor villagers from applying for credit and loans at commercial banks. Sarvodaya offers loan rates that are significantly lower than those of the commercial banks and it makes the process of obtaining a loan much easier. Villagers explain that before the Sarvodaya bank opened in their village, they had to go to the nearest large town or to the government rural bank to apply for loans. This process usually took time and entailed a considerable amount of red tape in the form of applications to fill up, references to supply, and other hurdles to overcome. The only alternative to these banks was the local money lender who charged a very high rate of interest for small loans. The Sarvodaya bank or savings section provides a much more people-friendly approach to these matters. Since the Sarvodaya bank is usually located in the village, the loans are approved by a committee of village neighbors. Instead of setting up barriers that discourage people from applying for loans, Sarvodaya encourages people to apply and offers loan rates that are lower than those of the commercial banks.

Sarvodaya does not insist on collateral for small loans and provides extension services to help people succeed with the projects that they are using the loans to finance. Sarvodaya's banks and savings societies possess a distinctly Buddhist character, that unlike Sampath Bank is not limited to slogans and advertisements. For example, Sarvodaya banks refuse to give loans for agricultural endeavors that involve killing animals.

The effects of Sarvodaya's village banking can be measured in a couple of ways. On the local level, these banking and credit programs have assisted many people to save and to start small business projects. It is significant that a majority of Sarvodaya's village bank managers have been women and a majority of the small business loans have gone to women. On a wider scale, Sarvodaya views these banking programs as one approach to challenging the top-down government and corporate establishment. These village banks allow the villagers' funds to remain in the village and serve as a base for the economic empowerment of the village community—rather than being exported to the city to support it and the multi-national banks. Ariyaratne regards these banking programs not so much as ways to enable villagers to fit into the current open economy but as the foundation for a comprehensive social revolution that will bring an alternative economic structure. Sarvodaya hopes that these village banks will help transform the economic order of the country by bringing bottom-up banking and fostering sustainable development.[37]

Steve Kemper has described banking as "a conduit that links Sri Lanka to the larger world…and a critical link between global forces and ordinary people living lives dependent on values and long-term strategies that often work at cross purposes with the interests of capitalist institutions."[38] Sarvodaya's village banking system tries to reverse the flow in this conduit by giving the ordinary people and their values more control. Sarvodaya's village banking system serves as a concrete example of how its reforms that begin in the village can rise to impact the national level as the grassroots network acquires power.

Conclusion

Sarvodaya definitely shares the Sinhala Buddhist ethos—especially the kind of leftist, socialist ethos that Bandaranaike represented. A.T.Ariyaratne still has great admiration for Bandaranaike and can be said to remain a leftist at heart. Despite the claims by Sarvodaya leaders that Sarvodaya is not a Buddhist organization, it clearly has much in common with the ways that the resurgent Sinhala Buddhism has addressed both the ethical tradition of Buddhism and the ethnic heritage of the Sinhalas. This is one reason why Sarvodaya's critics, as well as Tamils and Muslims outside of the Sarvodaya movement, tend to perceive it as a Buddhist organization. Sarvodaya, however, clearly transcends this Sinhala Buddhist perspective in the ways that it addresses the challenges of the contemporary context. Here Sarvodaya displays its Gandhian universalism and its revolutionary spirit in advocating non-violent social change that will benefit all people. In calling for a social revolution, Sarvodaya breaks with the dominant Sinhala Buddhism and establishes its own identity. This is Sarvodaya's distinctive vision and its contribution to the engaged Buddhist dialogue.

Notes

1 Sallie King, "Engaged Buddhist Ethics: the Dialectics of Buddhist Tradition and Contemporary Globalism." Paper presented to the American Academy of Religion, 1999, p. 2.

2 Steven Kemper, *Buying and Believing: Sri Lankan Advertising and Consumers in a Transnational World* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

3 Ibid., 157.

4 Ibid., 140.

5 Ibid., 143.

6 Ibid.

7 Ananda Guruge (ed.), *Return to Righteousness: A Collection of the Speeches, Essays and Letters of the Anagarika Dharmapala* (Colombo: Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1965), 509.

8 Kemper, *Buying and Believing,* 137.

9 Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 215.

10 Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, "Conclusion: An Interim Report on a Hypothetical Family," in Marty and Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 825.

11 Steven Kemper, *The Presence of the Past* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 6.

12 Kemper, *Buying and Believing,* 93.

13 Ibid., 10.

14 King, "Engaged Buddhist Ethics," 2.

15 Kemper, *Buying and Believing,* 79.

16 Sir Charles Metcalfe, in a report in 1832 to the British House of Commons. Cited in Detlef Kantowsky, *Sarvodaya, the Other Development* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980), 87.

17 Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India." *New York Daily Tribune,* June 25, 1853. Cited in Kantowsky, *Sarvodaya, the Other Development,* 91.

18 Gandhi in *Harijan,* March 23, 1947. Cited in Kantowsky, *Sarvodaya, The Other Development,* 92.

19 A.T.Ariyaratne, *A Buddhist Vision for the Future* (Ratmalana, Sri Lanka: Sarvodaya Visva Lekha Press, 2002), 5.
20 Kemper, *Buying and Believing,* 153.
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22 A.T.Ariyaratne, "Transformation of Vision into Reality—Planning for Development (Awakening)" (speech delivered at the Asian Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines, September, 1990) (Ratmalana, Sri Lanka: Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Press), 10.
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24 "A Strategic Plan for Sarvodaya Members," (unpublished document), July, 1994.
25 Denis Goulet, *Survival with Integrity: Sarvodaya at the Crossroads* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1981), 86.
26 A.T.Ariyaratne, Niwano Peace Prize, "Acceptance Speech," December, 1992, 25.
27 A.T.Ariyaratne, *The Power Pyramid and the Dharmic Cycle* (Ratmalana, Sri Lanka: Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Press, 1988).
28 M.K.Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (ed. A.Parel) (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1997) (original essay written in 1946), 188.
29 Ariyaratne, *Power Pyramid,* 20.
30 Kemper, *Buying and Believing,* 164.
31 Ibid., 164.
32 Ibid., 166.
33 Ibid., 167.
34 Ibid., 172.
35 Ibid., 167.
36 Ibid., 188.
37 Interview with the Director of SEEDS, Mr.Shakila Wijewardena. Moratuwa, October 16, 2002.
38 Kemper, *Buying and Believing,* vii.

16
THE GENESIS OF ALL OUR DEPENDENTLY ARISEN HISTORIES

The divine plan of creation

John P.Keenan

It is a pleasure to contribute to this Festschrift honoring Professor Charles Prebish, a fellow graduate of the University of Wisconsin's Buddhist Studies Program and colleague of many years. Dr. Prebish made his mark in Buddhist Studies with his early work on the Buddhist *Vinaya* and his later extensive treatment of the enculturation of Buddhism in the West. He deserves the gratitude and respect of our profession for his energetic contributions to electronic publishing and the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics,* his recent online textbook *Buddhism—the eBook,* and his editorial efforts in the publication of works on Buddhism.

Salvation history

Creation did not come at the beginning of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The founding account of the Hebrew Bible, which pervades also the entirety of the Christian scriptures, is salvation history. For Jews and for Christians, who appropriated the Hebrew story, the foundational account is the liberating exodus of our ancestors from bondage in Egypt, and this narrative functions as the overarching metaphor for human lives lived in harmony with that unfathomable mystery we call God.

This metaphor is not and never has been unproblematic. In depicting God as a loving, emotionally engaged guide and almighty protector of humans, it runs counter to that great part of human experience that seems devoid of any such divine oversight or providence. Despite this, we affirm that our history is a history of salvation. There is a Judeo-Christian penchant for affirming things that go directly counter to all commonsense assumptions. (Perhaps our traditions are so aware of mystery that they never settle too securely and finally into any fixed viewpoint, but are engaged in ever new viewpoints?) We find ourselves thrown into the immediacy of the here and now, aware of our contingency—that we might not be, and indeed that soon we will not be here and now. The truths we affirm simply are not empirical realities, so much so that our ancestors were driven to construct eschatological frameworks within which those truths might become true. We cherish a spiritual mode of awareness that transcends all the ordinary living of our lives: salvation history looks not just to the past, wherein we can detect its contours only with difficulty, but also and importantly to a future never yet experienced.

Israel's narrative begins with the mighty deliverance of the people from bondage in Egypt. It is an account of events in human history. Yahweh took notice of the sufferings of his people and drowned the armies of the Pharaoh in the waters of the Red Sea. (He loved the oppressed Israelites, not the oppressor Egyptians.) He guided them through the wilderness of Sinai and directed Moses to come to the mountain top, where he would encounter Yahweh himself, receive the tablets of Torah, and thereafter teach the people and lead them into the land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey.

This narrative recounts the history of Israel and its fortunes among the powers of the Fertile Crescent, from the confederacy of the twelve tribes on to the kingdom of our father David. Yahweh swears an eternal covenant with David, as he had with Abraham, that he would always be our God and we would always be his people. Throughout the struggles with foreign cultures and alien gods, Yahweh sends prophets and soldiers to teach the people and to protect them in battle. He is the ruler of the universe. He alone is God above the storm and above the tumult. Israel's oldest faith confession was this "historical credo," the content of which is preserved in Deuteronomy 26:5–10.[1]

> A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and soujourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to Yahweh the God of our fathers, and Yahweh heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; and Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And behold now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Yahweh, hast given us.

Thus, from very early on, the faith of Israel is embedded in history. It is indeed a mythic history, a theological story of family origins. Yahweh is our God, and little compassion is shown to the Egyptian children slain by the Passover angel or the Canaanites who thought they already possessed that land of milk and honey. Yahweh is perceived at first as a tribal god, who conquers other gods on behalf of his beloved people.

But this story also engendered deep skepticism, for quite often Yahweh did not perform as the myth predicted. Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians marched through the land of Israel, frequently conquering the people and once removing their leaders to captivity in a far-distant land, beside the banks of strange rivers. Such untoward events had to be interpreted from some "higher" viewpoint: as God's punishment of a recalcitrant people. Such a story is theological, a metahistory from a religiously privileged viewpoint. We are heirs to that viewpoint because we too have read the prologue to the Book of Job, and know that it all is merely a test, a test that people often fail, for which they suffer the consequences. But Job-like cries arise constantly that, even though the people do practice the path of justice and peace, God still remains absent at crucial moments of Israel's trials.

The New Testament stretches this theological story forward in time, for Christians. Therein God sends his only son Jesus to be the messiah and to deliver us from the bondage of sin and delusion. The meaning of many terms now shifts and changes, for

among the earliest Christians there is little hope of political deliverance from the Roman legions; deliverance is solely from the bondage of sin, that basic choice for self-centered living that is carried out in deeds that negate and ignore the commandments. Jesus' dying becomes for Christians the fulcrum of history, upon which time itself is divided. We Christians are a people delivered from bondage, like our Israelite ancestors.

So the Bible narrative actually began with historical events interpreted theologically. It did not begin at the creation of the world, but went back only to the time of our pre-Israelite ancestors, the patriarchs. However, once Yahweh came to be seen as the ruler of the universe, he no longer could be understood as merely the tribal god of Israel, fighting other gods and other peoples. He is lord over all. The Book of Genesis and the first part of Exodus were then added at the beginning of the Hebrew scriptures, to show that Yahweh not only called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, but, even before Abraham, he created everything that is. The Genesis accounts relate how the people came to be in Egypt in the first place, and, prior to that, how they came into being, how they and everything else were created. These accounts were added to the faith confession, proclaiming that even before the exodus from Egypt, Yahweh alone acted as the maker of everything that is. These stories constitute a "prequel" to the history of the chosen people—Jewish, Christian, and Islamic. As prequel, they are brought within the foundational story of the people, within the orbit of their theological history as its beginning point. God's creative action predates our common father Abraham, with whom Yahweh swore the very first covenant and to whom Yahweh pledged his unswerving commitment. The biblical creation stories were never meant to provide cosmological information about how the world or the universe came into being. They have no cosmological information to provide. Physics has taken over the role of the older philosophical or biblical cosmologies. The Book of Genesis stresses that, even as Yahweh himself rested on the seventh day, so should all faithful Israelites observe the restful Sabbath. At issue is not the fact that the world is created—everybody knew that—but that the pattern of Sabbath observance derives from the primal creative act of God.

Thus, as Old Testament scholar Bernhard W.Anderson demonstrates in his book *Creation Versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible* (Minneapolis, Min.: Augsburg Fortress, 1987), Genesis was composed to fill in the beginning of history, the beginning of our story. The two accounts of creation that are found therein borrow much material from earlier Canaanite, Assyrian, and especially Babylonian creation myths. The Mesopotamian creation epic *Enuma Elish,* and the struggles of the Canaanite god Baal to subdue the monsters of chaos, all enter into the account. But in the Hebrew Book of Genesis all these creation myths are transformed by the assertion that Yahweh alone is the source of everything. There is no struggle here between competing primal forces. Other myths picture primeval struggles between God's ordering power and the chaos of formless matter, where the pre-historical God forms the earth and subdues chaos. They depict the conquest of sea dragons, whereby God sets the limits of the waters above and below.

Israel adopts many of these mythic accounts, but not to teach that God's order wins out over an equally primal and threatening chaos. Nowhere are there any forces co-equal with God. The waters do not co-exist with God and he has no need to worry whether they might engulf the world. The flood happened once because God allowed the waters to flow freely, to punish human unfaithfulness. Still, Yahweh made his rainbow promise

that he will never allow it to happen again: he does control the waters and assign their limits. This Genesis "prequel" to Israel's sacred salvation history *(Heilsgeschichte)* constitutes the opening chapter to the early creedal confession that we are a people created by an intelligent and compassionate God and immersed in human history and guided therein toward a happy end, a final recapturing of the yet unexperienced realities of all our Eden images. The myth presents the truth about the past and points to the truth about the future.

Christians know all this and accept the account as their own, adding that there are no emanations from God into distant matter, that—transcendent to all creatures—God brings about the cosmos by the sheer act of his speaking, *ex nihilo*. Emanations from God were taught by Gnostic sects both to bridge the otherness of God and to stress the distancing of matter from God. They gained no place in Christian thought. No spiritual elect share in the creative spirit of God. He speaks, and all beings, spiritual and material, come into being; there is no laddered gradation from this created world to the supernatural, divine world. The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is meant to negate any supernatural linkage that would obliterate the absolute transcendence of God. Even in these Christian theologies, creation accounts are meant to provide no cosmological explanation of how it all came to be. That God created all is again simply assumed as a cultural given, and the point is that we are immersed in our quite human history. All is just history, from creative beginning to eschatological end.

Positively, the world we are given—spirit and matter—is pronounced by Yahweh, after each day of creative endeavor, to be good indeed. We, however, are not the chief movers here, but rather the stewards of this earth, not its controllers. God is king of the universe. We are transient and contingent creatures. We are reduced from the prime players Adam envisaged when he wanted to be "like God," for we are not like God, in abiding control of the course of our world. Rather, we are like all the other creatures of the world. Indeed, the covenant made with Noah is extended not only to all his descendants but also to all the animals housed on that capacious ark and we become what we are: human stewards in the ongoing story of the earth. We are tasked as stewards to live historically to help this world come to its final consummation, because every alpha point mirrors some omega point.

Buddhist critique of creation

Buddhists have long criticized the thesis that Maheśvara (The Almighty) created the world; they profess disbelief in any creator god. The *Ch'eng weishih lun,* a compendium of Yogācāra philosophy, summarizes the argument:

> Some claim that there is one almighty god, whose nature is real, omnipresent, and eternal, and who can create all things. But this opinion is illogical for the following reasons: (1) if he creates all things, he cannot be eternal, and thus, not being eternal, he would not be omnipresent, (2) if his nature were eternal, omnipresent, and endowed with all capabilities, then at all times he would instantaneously create all things, and (3) if he is able to create only by relying on desire or on other conditions, then that

> contradicts the teaching of a single cause, for then that desire or those conditions would also have to arise simultaneously, because they would be eternal [also].

These objections to a creator god, I maintain, have little application to the Genesis myths nor do they relate very much to the later theology of creation *ex nihilo*. The biblical myths do not even try to demonstrate that the world is created by God. They assume it. Later creation theologies do not understand God as “a great being among beings” who at a certain point comes to create the universe. Quite the contrary, they insist that, in creating, God is not altered or drawn into the created world. The Genesis myths borrow commonly available elements from surrounding cultures to sketch a beginning point in the history of Israel. That God creates the world is simply and without argument assumed. But the Hebrew accounts in Genesis alter the borrowed myths by stressing that God is totally sovereign, not drawn into some primal struggle with forces of chaos equally ancient or potent.

Later philosophers engaged the issue of creation precisely because their pagan critics mocked the mythic accounts. Christians and Jews answered their pagan interlocutors by arguing that: (1) creation in time does not militate against the eternity of the creator because God remains totally unchanged, transcending time and space (acting *ad extra*, that is to say, without any before or after); God never passes from potency to act, for God is never in potency toward any act, and thus can never become an agent; (2) God indeed creates continually, holding beings in being at each and every moment; and (3) that God creates *ex nihilo*, without any prior condition or cause. Medieval and modern Christian philosophers teach that God is not “a being among beings,” as envisaged in the Buddhist critique, but the very act of existing itself *(ipsum esse subs is tens)*, not an all-powerful being within the processes of being, because he is not a being at all, but rather an act; not a noun but a verb.

There are a host of creation theologies. Some may indeed fall within the sights of the Buddhist critique, for some do teach God as a supreme, omnipotent being among beings. But they are not the only options, nor indeed the most profound. One can consult the Neo-Thomism of Étienne Gilson (for whom God is the very “to be” in which all creatures share through the creative act), the mystic evolutionism of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (for whom God is the Omega point of all the inchoate and conscious evolution of the cosmos), the apophatic recovery of Jean Daniélou (for whom, following Gregory of Nyssa, God is the ever-to-be-attained depths of the infinite quest of “stretching forth” toward deeper experience and insight), the process theology of Charles Hartshorne (for whom God is the creativity of the cosmos itself), or the critical philosophy of Bernard Lonergan (for whom God is the term of the pure mind). All offer options never envisaged by ancient—or modern—Buddhist critique. By and large, Buddhist critics of theism have not and do not read any of the above thinkers, for it takes much additional effort to learn new languages and delve into strange philosophies. Likewise, Christian philosophers seldom attend to or even know about the subtle critiques of Nāgārjuna or Dharmakīrti, for they too are busy about their own philosophies and disinclined to stretch forth toward the complexities of Mahāyāna āna philosophy. Too much is falsely assumed in doctrinal discussions between Buddhists and Christians.

Neither modern creation theologies nor early Genesis myths teach creation cosmology. Rather, they insist that the very beginning, creation, was the starting point for the temporal story of our salvation and deliverance from bondage. They offer clear-eyed mythic history, flowing into a faith in an unfolding of God's plan for humans, for the future of the entire world.

Again, however, doubt seeps in—perhaps rushes in—for salvation history is problematic. Even if the truth of the divine plan lies in the future, how does one know that an eschatological truth is not simply a deluded escape from being human? It may be more religious propaganda than truth about living in harmony with the ground of our being and being human. The traditional eschatological and apocalyptic myths do often strike one as so far removed from the felt realities of our geopolitical lives that it is nothing more than a pious overlay of false hopes and religious delusions. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld refutes his critics by insisting that they do not have "the big picture," and so cannot level meaningful critiques from their narrow, uninformed viewpoints. Yet one doubts that Mr. Rumsfeld has any inkling of the complexity of the cultural and geopolitical factors at play in our world. One doubts that his "big picture" is more than a snapshot developed in the sealed war-rooms of the Pentagon. False hopes and religious delusions bring to mind images of fundamentalist prophets with serious mental problems: Muslims who expect the great God to assist them, Christians who assume that God is on their side, Jews who insist that God remains a real-estate broker for all future time. Such delusions transmute eschatology into privileged divine viewpoint and metahistory from which we might make sense of our lives and our world. Perhaps they deem their views are founded on some assured truth, accessed by the privileged faithful. But, like the Israelites before us, we too remain skeptical, not because of the philosophical weakness of the theological argument for God's creative act, but because of the absence of any sense of ongoing divine guidance in the course of our history. We Christians (and Jews perhaps) are in need of some assistance in understanding our own doctrine of salvation history and its beginning in the creation of the world. And so I turn to Buddhist thinkers who, speaking a different language, have different thoughts.

A Mahāyāna reading of Genesis

Buddhists are well attuned to causes and conditions. Indeed, in the tradition, the Buddha Śākyamuni himself was the first to understand the four truths: that this great mass of suffering and pain *(duḥkha)* has an originating cause *(samudaya),* that such a cause can be extinguished *(nirodha),* by the practice of the path *(mārga).* That origin of suffering was taught in the early texts to be the linked concatenation of conditions from ignorance and existential thirst to rebirth into endless suffering over many lifetimes *(saṃsāra).* Thus the Buddha taught the dependent arising *(pratītya-samutpāda)* of this experience of suffering, and how that might be countered step by step by the practice of the path. In this process, the world and its history are of no particular value. In the earliest texts, this world is merely the neutral scene (that is "the container world" for human endeavors) of our karmic delusion and suffering, itself created by such actions (karma), and to be left behind upon realization of cessation *(nirvāṇa).*

This, however, seems a particularly pessimistic view of the world and so has become one of the stock critiques of Buddhism itself. Buddhism, it is argued, is world-denying. So in due course Buddhist thinkers have come to the defense of their faith, for they too appreciate the beauty we experience and, just as Aristotle, are rapt in wonder at the very being of our being here. Despite South Asian cosmological assumptions about the eternal formation and destruction of an always-abiding primal matter, in East Asia Buddhism was grafted onto the earliest culture that kept detailed history books and saw the course of its people in terms of an historical flow. East Asian Buddhists have been forced by their cultural focus on the past as model for the future to live in real-time history, to be concerned for the future of their children, and to try to build a world of justice and compassion. Just as Jews and Christians have been compelled to come to terms with a naive myth about God's salvific plan for our history, so Buddhists have had to rethink a world fully turned back on its own eternally repeated suffering and meaninglessness.

And they have. There are many socially engaged Buddhists, from Theravāda practitioners Sulak Sivarakṣa and A.T.Aryaratne, to the Pure Land Mahāyānists in the peace movements of Japan. But these engaged Buddhists did not develop in a vacuum and they are doing much more than simply imitating engaged Christians. For a long time now Buddhist thinkers, especially in East Asia, have laid the foundation for world-engagement. One such is thinker is Gadjin M.Nagao, whose writings show that long ago Buddhist philosophers came to terms with the world, not merely as the theater of pain and suffering, but as the field of intelligent and compassionate bodhisattva activity. That indeed is the central import of Mahāyāna, for its foundational teaching of emptiness means that all viewpoints and all images are empty of any stable and abiding reality. That applies even to the Buddhist teachings. The suffering that constitutes *saṃsāra* and the peace that defines nirvana are both empty of any final reality, and thus the bodhisattva (wisdom-being) is committed to achieving a non-abiding awakening. The goal of final cessation is replaced by the state of awakening (*saṃbodhi*) that abides neither in final rest nor in the world of delusion. Such emptiness is, however, but one side of a teaching that embraces also dependent arising. In its early and first sense, dependent arising is the arising of the *saṃsāric* delusion and suffering that lead to the world of meaninglessness. But in a second and deeper sense, the classical Mahāyāna thinkers taught that dependent arising is the course of this world in which an awakened person is meant to practice the deeds of intelligent compassion: to be socially engaged and immersed in history. In this sense, an awakened person understands the causes and conditions that lead to suffering, injustice, war, and death, and takes appropriate action to reverse the process and bring about peace and gladness for all sentient beings. That understanding of dependent arising, in my understanding, is human history.

In addition to the basic insight into emptiness and dependent arising, the other main Mahāyāna doctrine which can also be of help here is that of the two truths, which reflect this dynamic of emptiness and dependent arising in terms of our experience, insight, and judgment. Since all viewpoints are empty of fixed and unchanging reality, the ultimate truth is quiescent of all verbal fabrication, the silence of the saints and the bliss of cessation—experienced in deep concentrated states of prayer, but not mediated by word or image, by insight or judgment. The truth of worldly convention is just as truly a truth, but it is mediated in words, culturally conditioned and conventional, driving one's

practice in the world to better the conditions under which people live their lives. It is a mediated "outflow" from the primal realm of Buddhahood, of awakening. Such conventional truth remains always historical, cultured in the terms of some particular place and time, encoded in some particular language and symbols. Perhaps in the near future we can develop a universal language for justice and peace, a universal earth charter for world justice and peace that can function for all humans. Many are working on just such a charter today and I support their efforts. But even such a world agreement would remain historical and human. To call a truth conventional is to negate its finality and to reject any attempt to usurp its historical status by some false imagined ultimate that pretends to espy the really real from some higher viewpoint. All viewpoints are conventional, and true or false on conventional terms. Such conventional truth is the Mahāyāna analogue for Judeo-Christian ideas about salvation history. This perspective is the help we Christians can receive from the masters of the Buddhist traditions.

A Mahāyāna understanding of creation and salvation history

Christian salvation history is, then, in this Mahāyāna understanding, a conventional history about the deepest things we experience. It hovers around unmediated experiences, Moses on Sinai face to face with Yahweh, Jesus transfigured before his chosen disciples, saints and sinners struck by experiences too deep to analyze. Still, one cannot even point to silence by words, and nothing can be warranted by appeals to experiences that remain silent. Conventional truth is a matter of culture and language, of a re-engagement into human realms to think and adjudicate things according to the criteria of such realms. Even when we deal with revealed truth, it comes always through language and culture, reflected in our thoughts and our biases. In Mahāyāna terms, revelation is an "outflow" from the silence of the pure realm of truth. Yet it does flow out into teachings, theologies, symbols, and lives lived concretely as authentic humans. We express ourselves in human terms, for there are no other terms. So our stories, theologically so true that they are mythic, are creative and authentic expressions of insights into truth and executions of accurate and valid judgments. Myth signals not a paucity of truth, but truths so rich they cannot be stated otherwise.

Salvation history, starting with the creative beginning of the universe, is not a metahistory, a supernatural viewpoint of a divine plan with its identifiable benchmarks. Rather, it is the dependently arisen course of persons awakened to the progression of the actual lives we live and through which we cause and endure suffering and meaninglessness. It is not a history to which God is sometimes present and sometimes absent, so that we need complain about the lack of divine attention. The cry of the Psalmist (Psalm 44) for God to awaken and defend his people echoes with heart-rending pathos, but it does suppose that God is asleep. And that supposes that God is "a being among beings," able to act as a parent caring for children. That is to take a metaphor, however rich, reduce it to literal status, and then find it unacceptable because God is not a very good parent. Many children do die, through mischance, illness, anger, and war. The perennial problem of evil (how can good people suffer if God is all-loving and all-powerful?) errs in literalizing God into such a Big Being. But God, the theologians insist, is the very act of existing, not a doting parent, even a very good parent.

With the assistance of a Mahāyāna understanding, then, we Christians can see that salvation history is our history, this history that we live. This is perhaps a frightening thought, for it removes the support of an overarching and all-embracing God who might save us from being human. Yet such support is an illusion. Salvation history as the dependent arising of our human history also removes from us the false certitude that God's plan will in fact be fulfilled, for our history in some large measure does depend on us. Eschatology is the grace-driven image of our human hopes and dreams of a just and peaceful future. We are the actors in human history and we can direct it to the joy and gladness shared by all, or act from narrow *realpolitik* and follow the practices of terror and the logic of war. We can enhance life on earth or aid and abet its destruction, reversing Yahweh's creative six days of work and bringing on only a final Sabbath of silent devastation all across a barren earth.

Note

1 See Bernhard W.Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament,* 4th edn (Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice Hall, 1986), for the question of the age and status of this "historical credo."

17
THE ECUMENICAL VISION OF BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU AND HIS DIALOGUE WITH CHRISTIANITY[1]

Donald K.Swearer

> To study different religions comparatively with an attitude of goodwill results in mutual understanding. This, in turn, brings about a way of thinking and acting in individuals that causes them not to hurt each other's feelings. And not to hurt one another's feelings further gives rise to peaceful coexistence par excellence between all societies and nations of the world.
>
> Christianity and Buddhism are both universal religions; they exist wherever truly religious people practice their religion in the most perfect way. If religious persons show respect for each religion's founder and for the *Dhamma*-truth at the core of each religion, they will understand this interpretation. Devotion to a religion results in the cessation of self-interest and self-importance and therefore leads to a realization of the universality and unity of all religions.
>
> (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Christianity and Buddhism*)[2]

A personal introduction

I am honored to contribute to this volume a revised version of my 2547 Spirit in Education Movement lecture, which I was invited to give by Acharn Sulak.[3] We have been friends since 2511 (1968 CE). That year I was studying the writings of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and Sulak kindly offered to accompany me to Wat Suan Mokkh, Buddhadasa's monastery near Chaiya, to meet Than Acharn. That visit to Suan Mokkh proved to be a memorable event in my life. Even though I was born and raised a Christian, the Buddhist philosopher, Buddhadasa, became an intellectual guide and spiritual inspiration. That same year Sulak, who was then the editor of Visakha Puja, published the first of several essays I have written about Buddhadasa Bhikkhu over the forty years of my professional career as a teacher of comparative religions. It seems fitting that as I approach retirement from Swarthmore College thirty-six years after meeting Buddhadasa, I once again reflect on the subject I addressed at that time, namely Buddhadasa's dialogue with Christianity.

I realize that the term “dialogue” is problematic in some Buddhist circles in Thailand where it is seen as a covert means of conversion. Such an understanding of inter-religious dialogue is extremely unfortunate because true dialogue, in my view and I think Buddhadasa’s as well, is an attempt to come to an in-depth and unbiased understanding of the worldview and the way of life of others. The purpose of dialogue in the sense of open, empathetic engagement is not conversion but mutual understanding and mutual enrichment; it is committed to learning rather than dogmatic assertion. The Sinclair Thompson lectures I delivered at the Buddhist Association in Chiang Mai in 2515 BE, and later published as *Dialogue: The Key to Understanding Other Religions* (1977)[4] were intended to promote such mutual understanding. The lectures reflect my conviction that the experience of dialogue has given me a richer understanding of both Buddhism and Christianity—what Buddhadasa would regard as the Dhammic nature of the world’s religions.

My dialogue with Buddhism has included studying Buddhist teachings and practices in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Japan; being instructed in insight meditation by teachers in each of those countries; inviting Phra Dhammapitaka to teach at Swarthmore College and Harvard University and Acharn Sulak to be a visiting professor at Swarthmore; being on the board of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists; and studying northern Thai Buddhist texts with the help and guidance of valued teachers and friends. I believe that my dialogical approach to Buddhism has deepened my understanding of the spiritual depths of what it means to be truly human and in doing so my Christian faith has been greatly enriched. My Christian colleagues in the Society for Buddhist—Christian Studies hold a similar view. Other Christians, however, are greatly troubled by this kind of open, dialogical stance, just as some Buddhists may view dialogue as covert evangelism.

Buddhadasa’s relevance

I wish to focus my remarks on the broad, inclusive principles on which Buddhadasa as a Buddhist philosopher grounds his understanding of Buddhism in particular, and also other religions, especially Christianity. Buddhadasa’s ecumenical vision, as I have chosen to call it, demands our attention today even more powerfully that it did thirty-six years ago when I first met him. We are now reeling from unprecedented threats and challenges, stresses and strains, that include the global menace of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, seemingly intractable problems of ethnic and religious violence, widespread degradation of the natural environment and biodiversity loss, an ever growing gap between the rich and the poor, and a tidal wave of amoral consumerism that sacrifices the long-term common good for the immediate satisfaction of short-term material benefit. Buddhadasa’s views offer a corrective to these forces of greed, divisiveness, and violence that engulf us. His vision of a dhammically governed society *(thammika sangkhom niyom)* is based on principles that are distinctively Buddhist but also truly universal. They include the principle of the good of the whole grounded in the knowledge of the dynamic and interdependent nature of things; the restraint of unbridled self-interest, coupled with the positive virtue of generosity; justice motivated by a sense of empathetic fairness for all sentient beings; and loving-kindness and compassion based on the wise insight that religions, like human beings, while different, share much in common.

Of the many intriguing aspects of Buddhadasa's worldview that deserve careful study, analysis, and critical evaluation—such as dhammic socialism, nature *(thamchat),* voidness *(suññatā),* and dependent co-arising *(paṭicca-samuppāda)*—I wish to focus specifically on his interpretation of religion with particular reference to Christianity. This is a fitting topic because today religion is regarded by many people as responsible for the spread of hatred and violence rather than providing a solution. Examples abound: Protestant-Catholic violence in Northern Ireland; the conflict between Albanian Muslims and Serbian Christians in Kosovo; the animosity between Muslims and Hindus in India; the terrorist acts on the Tokyo subway perpetrated by Om Shinrikyo; the Sinhalese-Buddhist/Tamil-Hindu conflict in Sri Lanka. The list goes on and on. In the face of religious violence, tension, animosity, and conflict—those that make headlines and those that do not—adherents of one religion or another are prone to respond defensively, assign blame to the other, or depict the other in the most negative and derogatory terms. These defensive responses only serve to exacerbate tensions among religious adherents. Instead of building bridges, walls are erected that prevent mutual understanding and the possibility of using the resources that reside in all religious traditions to contribute toward a more peaceful, harmonious, and just world.

I have chosen to speak about Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's ecumenical vision because of its universality and inclusive ness. His is a bridge-building understanding of religion that encourages every religious person to be faithful to his or her own tradition while at the same time respecting the truth and value of the other. Buddhadasa's interpretation of Buddhism and Christianity has not been without controversy. Some Thai Buddhists see his universalism as undermining their tradition, while some Christians charge that he distorts and misinterprets the Bible. The thought-provoking nature of Buddhadasa's point of view is revealed by the titles of his talks—"No Religion" *[Mai Mi Sasana],* "A Good Buddhist Should be a Good Christian" *[Chaw Phut Thi Di Yom Pen Khrit Thi Di]*—to name only two. Buddhadasa's purpose was to encourage both Buddhists and Christians to recover the deepest principles of their religions, to delve beyond the outer, superficial coverings that hide the true core, and in doing so to discover a common ground. For Buddhadasa this enterprise was nothing less than discovering the truth about the nature of things *(saccadhamma).*

I base my remarks primarily on four of Buddhadasa's writings: *Mai Mi Sasana* ["No Religion"] (2510 BE/ 1967 CE), *Khritasasana lae Phutasasana* ["Christianity and Buddhism"] (2510 BE/1967 CE), *Phasa Khon, Phasa Tham* ["Everyday Language and Dhamma Language"] (2510 BE/ 1967 CE), and *Chaw Phut Thi Di Yom Pen Khrit Thi Di* ["A Good Buddhist Should be a Good Christian"] (2522 BE/ 1979 CE). In these essays Buddhadasa develops his position around three basic themes: the distinction between ordinary language and truth language *(phasa khon/phasa tham),* the concept of non-attachment *(chit wang),* and the core unity of religions. These themes are woven throughout these writings and my remarks today.

> The ordinary, ignorant worldling is under the impression that there are many religions and that they are all different to the extent of being hostile and opposed. Thus one considers Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism as incompatible and even bitter enemies. Such is the conception of the worldly person who speaks according to ordinary impressions. Precisely

> because of such characterizations there exist different religions hostile to one another. If, however, people penetrate to the fundamental nature *(dhamma)* of religion, they will regard all religions as essentially similar. Although they may say there is Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and so on, they will also say that essentially they are the same. If they should go on to a deeper understanding of the *dhamma* until finally they realize the absolute truth, they will discover that there is no such thing called religion—that there is no Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam. Therefore, how can they be the same or conflicting?[5]

Buddhadasa's startling claim, "that there is no such thing as religion," can be analyzed in terms of four distinct but related dimensions: pedagogical, ethical, epistemological, and ontological. First, pedagogical. By the words *"mai mi sasana"* Buddhadasa intends to capture our attention and curiosity. Let's imagine that we're at Suan Mokkh half awake in the early morning waiting for Buddhadasa to deliver his *dhamma* talk. He slowly walks out of his *kuti,* sits down, and laughing softly blurts out, "there's no Buddha, no *dhamma,* no *sangha*!"[6] Suddenly, we're fully awake, wondering what he means by such an audacious statement, and all ears to what he will say next. Buddhadasa's pedagogical style, especially seen in his oral technique, is intended to shatter the doctrinal preconceptions that he believes blind most religious adherents from penetrating to the deepest meaning of their tradition. Equally important, Buddhadasa's style is a form of *sati* or focused awareness. This is the praxis dimension of his pedagogical technique that involves the attention of our bodies and our hearts *(chai),* as well as our minds *(chit).*

Second, Buddhadasa's phrase, "no religion," has an ethical dimension, namely an expression of his conviction that nonattachment lies at the heart of Buddhism and all religions. Preoccupation with the external trappings of religious institutions and their ritual ceremonies represents a particular form of attachment that obscures the true purpose of religion which is to transform egoism into altruism. In the case of conventional Thai Buddhist practice, Buddhadasa directs especially sharp criticism at the practice of merit-making rituals:

> the perception of most adherents of Buddhism is limited to what they can do to get a reward. While supporting the temples or monks and observing the precepts, they have only the objective of getting more in return than they give…. The heart of Buddhism is not getting things but getting rid of them. It is, in other words, nonattachment.[7]

In the area of inter-religious relationships, Buddhadasa believes that those for whom religion is a matter of external form and practice tend to have a narrow, exclusivistic understanding of their religion that inevitably leads to inter-religious conflict. Here Buddhadasa makes a connection between the terms "outer" and "outsider." Those who see their religion in terms of outer form fail to fathom its essential nature. Consequently, "they look down upon other religions while praising and supporting their own, thinking of themselves as a separate group. Outsiders are not part of our fellowship. They are wrong; only we are right."[8] For Buddhadasa, being attached to external, outer, physical

forms means that we see everything in dualistic terms—good or evil, merit or sin, happiness or unhappiness, gain or loss, is or is not, my religion versus their religion.[9]

Buddhadasa approaches the New Testament from his conviction that the core of religion is overcoming self-serving egoism. An example of this hermeneutical perspective is his interpretation of advice he ascribes to one of the Apostle Paul's New Testament letters, "Let those who have wives live as though they had none…those who mourn as though they were not mourning…those who buy as though they had no goods."[10] Most Christians understand that love of wife and family by definition involves attachment, not nonattachment, but for Buddhadasa any attachment stems from desires which lie at the root of suffering *(dukkha).*

Buddhadasa's interpretation challenges the popular Christian view; however, when we examine more carefully the Christian teachings on love, we find parallels between Buddhadasa's ethic of nonattachment and the Christian understanding of impartial love *(agape)* that finds expression, for example, in the thirteenth-century Catholic mystic Meister Eckhart's concept of "disinterested love." Buddhadasa's exegesis of the Apostle Paul calls on Christians to move beyond the popular or *phasa khon* level of love to a *phasa tham* understanding of the deepest meaning of impartial, disinterested, agapic love for everyone, those distant in affection as well as those near and dear.

For Buddhadasa nonattachment is expressed in a non-ostentatious lifestyle of moderation and generosity, an ethical teaching valued in both traditions. He finds in the Sermon on the Mount from the New Testament Gospel of Matthew a lifestyle of modest simplicity. In contrast to the typical practice at Thai Buddhist merit-making ceremonies that often feature public announcements of lavish donations to the *wat*, Buddhadasa cites the Biblical teaching that charitable gifts should be given with no public acknowledgment of the giver.[11] Generosity should not carry the intention of displaying one's wealth or for reasons of personal honor or even merit because these are forms of attachment. In his dialogue with Christianity, Buddhadasa not only uses Buddhism to exhort Christians to be better Christians but, as this example shows, he appeals to Christianity to admonish Buddhists to be better Buddhists. The central lesson in both cases is to act and give selflessly and in doing so to eschew an ostentatious lifestyle.

Third, the epistemological perspective of "no religion" resides in his distinction between everyday language *(phasa knon)* and truth language *(phasa tham)* that enables him to develop a strategy for inter-religious understanding whereby he claims that religions can be both the same and different. They are similar or the same at the level of *phasa tham* and different at the level of *phasa khon*. Buddhadasa's distinction between *phasa khon* and *phasa tham* is not simply a creation of his own ingenuity but bears similarities to the Theravāda distinction between conventional truth *(sammutisacca)* and absolute truth *(paramatthasacca),* as well as the Madhyamika theory of two levels of truth. In any case, Buddhadasa employs this hermeneutical strategy to interpret Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions.

In his essay "No Religion," Buddhadasa uses the term "death" to illustrate the distinction between *phasa khon* and *phasa tham*. He observes that on the conventional or ordinary level Buddhists do not "understand Buddhist scriptures," and Christians "often do not understand their own Bible," using as his example the reversal of the meaning of birth and death at the *phasa tham* level.[12] Thus, Buddhadasa interprets the passage in Matthew 19:17, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments," to mean life not in

the ordinary meaning of the word, but a life that will never know death; and, in Genesis 12:17 when God tells Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall die," death refers to a spiritual not a physical death.[13] For Buddhadasa spiritual death or sin as described in the Genesis story is dualistic thinking—good or evil, male or female, dressed or nude, husband or wife—and is similar to the Buddhist view regarding dualism and attachment: "whenever dualistic thoughts arise, there is bound to be suffering that is the equivalent of dying."[14]

Ethically, the commonality of religions is found in their distinctive teachings about overcoming self-centeredness and its positive correlate, other-regarding love; epistemologically and linguistically the commonality is found in the metaphorical and symbolic nature of religious language; and, finally, from an ontological point of view, Buddhadasa's enigmatic phrase, "no religion," refers to a common ground shared by all religions. By its very nature this common ground cannot be described. We may name the indescribable as *Nibbāna,* God, Brahman, Tao, but they serve only as pointers. They do not exhaust the meaning of the reality to which they point, and if understanding remains stuck at the merely descriptive or *phasa khon* level, true understanding remains hidden or unknown.

In the essay, "No Religion," Buddhadasa uses the simile of water to indicate the meaning of the common ground of world religions:

> Let us consider a simile, something very simple—water. Most people think there are many different kinds of water and will view various kinds of water such as rainwater, well water, water in swamps, water in toilets as if they have nothing in common. This judgment is based on external criteria. A person with more knowledge, however, realizes that regardless of type or kind, pure water can be distilled and filtered out of it. If we proceed further in our analysis we shall conclude there is no water—only two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. What we have been calling water is void, empty. In the same way, one who has attained to the ultimate truth sees that there is no such thing as religion.[15]

When speaking of Buddhism, Buddhadasa most often uses the term *dhamma* to refer to that reality whose very nature cannot be labeled. Sometimes he appears to attribute a personal quality to *dhamma* as, for example, when he uses the term, *phradhammachao* (Lord Dhamma). However, Buddhadasa most often interprets the *dhamma* as nature *(thamachat),* the laws of nature *(kot thamachat)* which he equates with the natural, normative condition of things *(pakati).* Although the conventional Christian understanding of God ascribes personal qualities to God, as in the phrase "God the Father," there is a long-standing theological tradition in Christianity that would concur with Buddhadasa when he says that the *dhamma* or God can be neither Thai nor Chinese, black nor white, Eastern nor Western, Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, or any other designation. The tradition of apophatic theology holds that only negative declarations can be made about God, that is, what God is not rather than what God is.

Buddha, *dhamma,* and God

Tempting as it would be to begin an examination of these three terms with a Buddhadasa-type laugh and exclaim, “there is no Buddha, no *dhamma*, no God,” that would leave me with little else to say! Using Buddhadasa’s “no religion” perspective, we are enjoined to deconstruct the everyday or conventional understanding of these terms in order to penetrate to their deepest meaning; and, furthermore, when we come to this realization, not only are the Buddha and the *dhamma* equated, they share a common meaning with the Christian concept of God.

The equation of *dhamma* and Buddha has a respected, if much debated, tradition in the history of Buddhist thought.[16] Thus, while Buddhadasa’s interpretation may startle the ordinary Thai Buddhist, it is consistent with a stream of Buddhist thought found in Theravāda as well as other Buddhist traditions. The *phasa khon* or conventional view of the Buddha regards him as a physical man of flesh and bone who was born in India over two thousand years ago, died, and was cremated.[17] From the *phasa tham* perspective, however, the Buddha became the Buddha only by the virtue of the truth that he realized, namely the *dhamma*. Therefore, the Buddha is nothing other than this truth. To venerate the historical person called the Buddha or to believe that this person is somehow miraculously present in Buddha images and relics turns the Buddha into an object of attachment: “The *dhamma* is something intangible. It is not something physical, certainly not flesh and bones.”[18] As the *dhamma,* the Buddha in the true sense has not died. What has ceased to exist is just the physical body or outer shell. The real teacher, the *dhamma,* is with us still.

Buddhadasa’s deconstruction of the identification of the Buddha with a historical personage parallels his interpretation of the *dhamma*. In the conventional view the *dhamma* is identified with the Buddhist scriptures, a view Buddhadasa satirizes as “*dhamma* in the bookcase.”[19] *Dhamma* in the truest sense, however, does not refer to either the written or oral tradition of teaching but a non-physical, all-embracing reality that Buddhadasa identifies as nature (*thamachat;* Pāli, *dhammajāti*). He spells out this identification by a creative reinterpretation of the Four Noble Truths, transforming them from their usual sequence—suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path to its cessation—into the interdependency between nature and human flourishing—nature in itself, the laws of nature, our duty in accordance with the laws of nature, the benefits derived from understanding and following the laws of nature.[20]

In his 2510 BE Sinclair Thompson lectures Buddhadasa addresses the Christian concept of God in a manner similar to his earlier treatment of the Buddha and the *dhamma*. Acknowledging that like the words Buddha and *dhamma* the term God in the Christian tradition has multiple meanings, he then analyzes “God” through the lens of *phasa khon/phasa tham*. In ordinary language when the God of the Bible is anthropomorphized a logical problem is created:

> Suppose we tell a child that God is omnipresent and the child responds, “Even in a dog?”[21] How then shall we answer? The child only recognizes the word “God” in its conventional context; he cannot understand how

> God [as a person] could exist in such things. But it is impossible to say that God is not in these things for if God is not everywhere then he is not God. The God of ordinary language denotes a personal being with human emotions like anger and love. He cannot exist in a dog, for it is too earthy, too lowly for the presence of the highest. However, the God of religious language, called *dhamma*, is without emotions, impersonal, beyond the duality of clean and dirty. Therefore, this God can be in everything, even a dog.[22]

The omnipresent God of the Bible, in Buddhadasa's view, can be compared to the Buddhist understanding of universal Buddha-nature *(Buddhabhava)* and to *asankhata-dhamma*, the law of nature that is unconstituted, unformed, and unlimited: "It acts in everything, in every atom perceptible to the senses and to the mind, and in the actions and reactions of these psychological functions as well. To see the *asankhata-dhamma* is to cast off illusion and see God. To see it is to live in the kingdom of God without suffering."[23] The God of ordinary language is limited and anthropomorphized, whereas God as *asankhata-dhamma* is everywhere present and acts in all things.

Buddhadasa has been criticized for dhammacizing God and for theologizing the *dhamma* in a way that glosses over fundamental differences between the Christian and Buddhist worldviews. Such criticisms, although not without validity, disregard Buddhadasa's loftier purpose of promoting mutual sympathy, understanding, and cooperation among adherents of different religious traditions. Furthermore, Buddhadasa's hermeneutical principle of *phasa khon/phasa tham* enables him to claim not that all religions are the same but, rather, that religions are both alike and different; and that the fundamental elements that religions share in common, such as the value of other-regarding love, is deeper and more significant that what divides them.

Buddhadasa has articulated a singular, though not unique, understanding of religion. His interpretations of Buddhism and Christianity should be critiqued and evaluated. However, those who criticize Buddhadasa should keep his stated purpose in mind and assume the responsibility for developing a better program for promoting inter-religious understanding and cooperation than Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's. Otherwise, as Buddhadasa was well aware, relationships among religions will continue to be marked by divisiveness, animosity, and violence.

A good Buddhist is necessarily a good Christian

The title of Buddhadasa's *dhamma* talk at Wat Suan Mokkh in 2523 BE/ 1980 CE, *Phut Thi Di Yom Pen Khrit Thi Di* ("A Good Buddhist Is Necessarily a Good Christian") is even more intriguing and controversial than his 2510 lecture, *Mai Mi Sasana* ("No Religion"). Let us again picture ourselves waiting for Buddhadasa to begin his lecture. We are familiar with Thai Christians, perhaps have Christian friends, or have been given Christian literature. Whether our perception of Christianity in Thailand is positive, negative, or neutral, we believe that Christians and Buddhists are different in both belief and practice. Like a clever trickster Buddhadasa turns this perception we bring with us to

his *dhamma* talk on its head. If I am a "good" Buddhist, how can I also be a "good" Christian!?

Buddhadasa begins his lecture as he did when he spoke about "No Religion" by elucidating once again his well-known *phasa khon/phasa tham* hermeneutical strategy. He first applies the principle to Thai Buddhism, then to Zen, and finally to Christianity. Given the nature of the Wat Suan Mokkh audience, the sequence is important, beginning with the most familiar and then moving progressively to the less and finally to the least familiar. In this way, he prepares his listeners to be more open to the comparisons he draws between Buddhism and Christianity, which is his ultimate purpose.

Buddhadasa's opening comments about Buddhism focus on the conventional understanding of the Buddha that associates the Buddha's *[pari]nibbana* with his death. Old age, suffering, and death is the nature of things; the Buddha died; therefore, the Buddha is absent. For Buddhadasa, to understand the Buddha only in this way denies the very heart of Buddhism, for the Buddha's enlightenment represents the very negation of these conditions:

> The Buddha cannot die for the word, Buddha, refers to the Buddha's spiritual awakening which by its very nature is the transcendence of birth, old age, suffering, and death, and the conditions of *kamma* and rebirth. If this is not so, then Buddhism is of no value.[24]

Buddhadasa observes that the dead-and-gone Buddha presents a problem for Buddhists when they repeat again and again the ritual formula, "we take refuge in the Buddha." He points out that this conception of the Buddha provided an argument for Christian missionaries to Thailand who questioned the Thai:

> Will you depend on someone who is dead and gone or will you have faith in someone who is with you forever? Our God transcends death and is here with us for eternity. Your Buddha realized *nibbāna,* died, and is no longer here.[25]

Buddhadasa observes that the mythological elements in the Buddha story pose a problem for modern Buddhists similar to the Biblical myths for Christians. For example, the claim that upon his birth the future Buddha took seven steps makes no rational sense. Using his demythologizing strategy, Buddhadasa suggests that the story can be interpreted as symbolizing the future Buddha's itinerary to seven locations or countries in India.[26] In the case of the Genesis creation story, the sequence that God created light before the sun and the moon contradicts scientific rationality, but if "light" is interpreted as the power God used to create the sun and the moon then the sequence makes meaningful sense.[27]

Buddhadasa broadens his analysis of Buddhism beyond Theravāda to include Zen which he introduced to Thailand with translations of the writings of Hui Neng and Huang Po. He eulogizes Zen for integrating meditation, wisdom, and action into a single path; for combining the teachings of not-self, voidness, and suchness *(tathatā);* and for the method of *kōan* training to realize pure consciousness through sudden enlightenment. In response to the critics who accuse Buddhadasa of being a Zen apologist, he responds that

he is not a proponent of Zen, but Theravāda Buddhists have much to learn from Zen teachings and practice.[28]

Buddhadasa brings the same imaginative, broadminded openness to Christianity, stating at the outset that he speaks about other religions in order to promote more harmonious relations among them, not to encourage conversion: "As you have often heard me say, I aspire to work for a better understanding among religions; to encourage individuals to understand their own religion as deeply as possible; and to promote liberation from materialism."[29] In "A Good Buddhist Is Necessarily a Good Christian," Buddhadasa adopts a twofold strategy to realize these goals: to discover similarities among religious traditions, and to broaden and enrich Buddhism through dialogue with Christianity, in particular. He freely acknowledges that his approach has provoked both Buddhists and Christians:

> A Christian might respond to what I say with the immediate suspicion that I'm an enemy who cannot be trusted and who plans to devour his religion. As for Buddhists, they might think I'm trying to harm Buddhism and am teaching the superiority of Christianity.[30]

Beyond looking at the concept of God through the Buddhist lens of *asankhata-dhamma* as he did in his 2510 Sinclair Thompson lectures, here Buddhadasa explores the ethical implications of the concept of God. He points out that for Christians God serves as the basic sanctioning authority for reinforcing moral action: "Christians act ethically because they have a firm belief in God and in God's punishment."[31] For Buddhists, the sanction of *kamma* encourages morally good deeds. In both cases the purpose is the same, namely being good or acting ethically, but the sanctioning authority differs.

Buddhadasa could have ended his discussion of the sanctioning authority of God and *kamma* at this point, but he goes further to observe, "These differences are not rigid and absolute. Buddhists might consider using some Christian ways *(withi)* that lead to a firm faith in the highest teachings of their religion."[32] In particular, he sees concepts associated with the Christian's faith in God—love, obedience, supplication, and thanksgiving—to have ethical value for Buddhists. Even though his interpretation of supplication *(onwon)* sounds quite Buddhistic—"Seeking God's favor means to try to be the very best to please God, so supplication can be interpreted as doing our very best"—his representation of thanksgiving sounds quite Christian—"We are thankful for our daily bread and that we survived another day. For Buddhists this means we abide in the *dhamma*. Christians thank God *(phrachao);* Buddhists thank the *phradhamma*."[33]

I began this analysis of Buddhadasa's ecumenical vision and his dialogue with Christianity by stating that Buddhadasa regards the overcoming of self-obsessive greed and hatred as a common value of all religions. Other-regarding concern, care, and love, the positive consequences of overcoming "me-first-ism" *(tua ku khong ku),* occupy an equally important place in Buddhadasa's thinking and figure prominently in his intriguing statement that to be a good Buddhist it is necessary to be a good Christian. I wish to close this part of my remarks with Buddhadasa's ecumenical vision regarding the core value of other-regarding care and love shared by the world's religions, and with my hope that his vision will inspire others, as it has inspired many of you here, to dedicate

their lives to the work of peace, healing, and reconciliation in a world torn by fractious conflict and violence.

> I am dedicated to building greater understanding among religions so that we may join hands and work together as human beings. This is the *dhamma* for the peace and happiness of everyone rather than promoting the happiness of my group or my religion and the suffering of others simply because they are different. The latter comes from feeling a deep-seated selfishness that prevents us from seeing others as similar to ourselves. I believe firmly that if one loves others, one is a good Christian and also a good Buddhist, and that a Buddhist who loves others is also a good Christian. So, when we love others we are at one and the same time a Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim. This is a common ground shared by all three religions.
>
> To always separate "us" from "them" destroys the core principle on which religions are based and mutual love becomes possible. If, as Buddhists, we cannot love Christians we are not true Buddhists because this contradicts a fundamental Buddhist principle, namely, that we love one another because we all share the same human condition of birth, old age, suffering, and death. If we sow even small seeds of suspicion we will become mutual enemies. Dividing the world into "me" and "you," "us" and "them," igdnores the truth that as human beings we share the same basic human conditions. If all Buddhists were to become good Christians, it would mean at the same time that all Christians would be good Buddhists.[34]

A good Christian is necessarily a good Buddhist

In concluding my remarks I have reversed the nouns in the title of Buddhadasa's talk. As a Buddhist, Buddhadasa declares, "Chao Phut Thi Di, Yom Pen Khrit Thi Di." As a Christian I propose to be as provocative and controversial regarding a Christian audience by saying, "Chao Khrit Thi Di, Yom Pen Phut Thi Di." I recognize, as I think Buddhadasa did in regard to his Buddhist audience, that many Christians might react to the statement, "a good Christian is necessarily a good Buddhist," with incomprehension or even anger. Buddhadasa wanted Buddhists to think deeply and in new ways about the nature of their faith; similarly, I intend to challenge Thai Christians to reconsider their own faith and the faith of their Buddhist neighbors in more open and creative ways that will lead to their mutual enrichment.

In 1967 while studying in Kandy, Sri Lanka, I asked my Sinhalese friend and Catholic priest, Father Antony Fernando, to describe his view of Christian evangelism. He replied, "I see my task as helping Buddhists to be better Buddhists." At the time I was startled but I've never forgotten that conversation. Father Fernando provoked me to think about my Christian faith from a new perspective as has Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. These are the fruits of true dialogue, an ongoing, dynamic process of growth and discovery that refuses to hide behind the walls of dogma, that is as open to the Buddhist *dhamma* in its 84,000

(that is, innumerable) manifestations as it is to the love of the Christian God extended to all humankind.

For Buddhadasa the core of religion in a practical sense is overcoming self-centered egoism, the liberation of the "self" from the self. He consistently interpreted seminal Pāli terms—*anattā,* (not-self), *suññatā* (emptiness), *nibbāna*—as well as his signature Thai phrase, *chit wang* (liberated mind), in terms of nonattachment and overcoming selfishness *(mai hen ke tua)*. Buddhadasa's ethics, his socio-political philosophy, and his understanding of the true nature of things *(pakati, idapaccayatā)* return time and again to the theme of non-attachment. He referred to the Pāli phrase, *sabbe dhammā nalam abhinivesāya* (nothing whatsoever should be clung to) as the pinnacle of the Buddha's teaching.[35] In one of his seminal writings, *Tua Ku Khong Ku* (Me and Mine) he makes an astonishing claim for a Theravādin:

> We don't need to speak of the Buddha, the *Dhamma,* or the *Sangha* or any points of doctrine, or of the history of Buddhism. We have to forget about all those things, and begin our studies by examining the words, "me" and "mine," or rather the feeling in the heart which gives rise to these words. To truly understand me-and-mine leads to the extinction of suffering.[36]

I propose to emulate Buddhadasa by putting myself in the position of a Christian trying to be a good Buddhist by reinterpreting the Christian concept of the "new creation" in the light of the Buddhist teaching of notself *(anattā)* which, for Buddhadasa, was the philosophical correlate of *chit wang* (nonattachment, liberated mind). Like Buddhadasa, in doing so I may be criticized for Christianizing Buddhism and Buddhicizing Christianity.

The Buddhist concept of *anattā* denotes a state of existence the opposite of a life of grasping *(taṇhā)*, mental defilement *(kilesa),* passion *(lobha),* hatred *(dosa)* and delusion *(moha)*. Other distinctions between these two modes of existence include darkness and ignorance *(avijjā)* versus light and knowledge *(vijjā),* and bondage *(bandhana)* versus freedom or liberation *(vimutti)*. The meaning inherent in the Buddhist sense of not-self bears a family resemblance to the Apostle Paul's understanding of the new creation in Christ. Paul contrasts two types of being or states of existence. The old life is one of bondage to the flesh, dominated by sin and, therefore, regulated by the law. The new life is one of faith filled with the power of God and freed from the conditions of existence that the apostle characterizes as the old creation or the old Adam. Despite differences of language and symbol between the two traditions, the structural similarity between Paul's understanding of the new creation and the Buddhist concept of not-self is striking.

Beyond the structural parallel between self→not-self, and old creation→new creation, the Buddhist understanding of not-self deepens the meaning of the conventional Christian view of the virtue of self-giving action, a thematic teaching in the Gospels of the New Testament. The follower of Jesus is admonished to forgive not seven times but seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22), to turn the other cheek instead of following the usual law of retribution of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Matthew 5:38), and to take up the cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 10:38). Such admonitions have an obvious ethical import; however, more than the change in manner of behavior there resides a change of character or being. The cross itself symbolizes this change. It is the supreme example of

kenosis, self-emptying, in which the man, Jesus, dies to conquer mortality in order to be reborn to immortality. The Christian takes up the same cross of self-emptying or, as Paul phrases it, the Christian dies the death of Jesus in order to share the life of the resurrection. The Christian language of new creation and resurrection is certainly not Buddhist language but when interpreted as a form of kenosis it invites comparison with Buddhist not-self *(anattā)*.

The Buddhist teaching of not-self challenges the *phasa khon* or conventional Christian understanding of the virtue of selflessness in terms of ordinary acts of service and generosity. To be selfless in the not-self or kenotic sense involves a radical revolution from an ego-oriented life and the realization of an egoless life. The Buddhist teaching of not-self has both negative and positive dimensions. On the one hand, it points to the utter displacement or negation of the self-center; on the other, however, it denotes a new mode of existence filled by compassion and equanimity that flows naturally from this radical transformation.

Within the framework of inter-religious dialogue, I propose that the Buddhist concept of not-self highlights the uncompromising nature of the Christian concept of new creation. In Buddhism to see one's true nature calls for "naughting" all contingent and erroneous self-images; authentic "personhood" transcends all personae. Similarly, at the *phasa tham* level the Christian concept of new creation demands nothing less than a God-likeness that as defined by Meister Eckhart is nothing other than kenosis or self-emptying.[37]

The late Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a Christian, an Islamicist, and director of the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University, makes a distinction between being a Buddhist and being Buddhist, being a Christian and being Christian, being a Muslim and being Muslim. For Smith, the nouns represented what Buddhadasa sees as the *phasa khon* or external aspects of a religion that become objects of attachment. The adjectives conveyed what Smith saw as the "faith" dimension of religion or, in Buddhadasa's terminology, the *phasa tham* dimension beyond the physical forms and historical traditions. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's "no religion" and W.C.Smith's "being adjectivally religious" are not the same, but both formulations invite Buddhists and Christians to enter into dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding that transcends the confines of dogma and narrow religious self-interest.

Notes

1 Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) annual lecture, May 2, 2004, Bangkok, Thailand. Slightly modified.

2 Buddhadasa Bhikku, *Christianity and Buddhism* (Bangkok: Sublime Life Mission, 1977).

3 Transliteration of Thai names and terms follows either popular usage or the system established by the Royal Institute of Thailand.

4 Donald K.Swearer, *Dialogue: The Key to Understanding Other Religions* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1977).

5 Buddhadasa Bhikku, "No Religion," in *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa,* ed. Donald K.Swearer (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1980), 146.

6 Ibid., 148.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 147–48.

9 Ibid., 151.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 152.
12 Ibid., 149.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 150.
15 Ibid., 147, adapted.
16 See my *Becoming the Buddha: Image Consecration in Thailand* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).
17 "Everyday Language and Dhamma Language," in *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa,* 127.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 128.
20 Ibid.
21 It would appear that in this example, Buddhadasa is subtly alluding to the famous Zen *kōan,* "Does the dog have Buddha nature?" to which the answer is *mu* variously translated as "no" or "no-thing."
22 "Buddhism and Christianity," in Swearer, *Dialogue: The Key to Understanding Other Religions,* 154, adapted.
23 Ibid., 153.
24 Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Phut Thi Di Yom Pen Khrit Thi Di* ("A Good Buddhist is Necessarily a Good Christian") (Bangkok: Bangkok Publishing, 2523 BE/ 1980 CE), 3–4. Translations mine.
25 Ibid., 6.
26 Ibid., 7–8.
27 Ibid., 9–10.
28 Ibid., 13–16.
29 Ibid., 17.
30 Ibid., 19.
31 Ibid., 20.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 23.
35 Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Heartwood from the Bo Tree,* trans. Santikaro Bhikkhu (Bangkok: Suan Usom Foundation, 1985), 12. See also Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Kan Tham Nagan Duae Cit Wang* ("Working with a Liberated Heart and Mind") (Bangkok: Society for the Propagation of Buddhism, 2518 BE/1975 CE), 8.
36 "Me and Mine," trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff), in *Me and Mine,* ed. Swearer, 88.
37 Raymond Bernard Blakney, *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 85.

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